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**THE DESERT
IN THE TRADITION OF ISRAEL**
**An Analysis of Passages from Hosea, Amos,
Isaiah, Jeremias, Ezekiel, and the Psalms**

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INTRODUCTION

Even a cursory reading of the books of the Old Testament shows that the narration of Israel's sojourn in the desert makes up a sizable part. The biblical text presents the desert as the common geographical setting for the fundamental events of the history of the people of Israel. Among these events are the revelation of the divine Name, the establishment of the covenant between YHWH and Israel, and the giving of the law¹. It can be said that «Israel's fundamental belief in her election as God's chosen people is rooted in the wilderness tradition»².

In the OT, there seems to be two contrary conceptions of the time spent by Israel in the desert. One, which is usually called the positive sense, considers the desert period as the time of the perfect relationship between YHWH and His people. The other, usually designated as the negative sense, presents the desert sojourn as a period of Israel's continuous infidelities and rebellions against YHWH. Both interpretations are well-documented in the Pentateuch, where both concrete interventions of YHWH and specific transgressions of Israel are narrated.

The present debate about the process of composition of the Pentateuch is well known³. Recently, there is a greater feeling of agreement concerning its final redaction towards the end of the Persian period and the presence of elements from two great compositions or redactions, namely, the Deuteronomist and the Priestly. However, there is still much to be done in reconstructing the origins and development of the traditions associated with the great themes that make up these compositions. Our study is found along this line of investigation. It is an attempt to trace the development of a tradition concerning a sojourn of Israel in the desert before her settlement in Canaan, and of the themes related to such tradition. We shall carry out this task through the analysis of biblical texts that do not form part

of the Pentateuch and that belong to a redactional period anterior or contemporary to it.

Our study falls within one of the areas of research that the Department of Sacred Scripture of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Navarre is undertaking. It forms part of a greater work that aims to show that from a primitive historical nucleus, a series of oral traditions was transmitted and, consequently, enriched in theological content throughout the process of its redaction in later periods.

This present work aims to discover the traces of the traditions of Israel's period in the desert in some prophetic books and the Psalms, analyze them, determine in what sense they are employed, establish what their relation is with the other great traditions of Israel, and study their development in writings of different redactional periods. This study is limited to the Books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Psalms. Thus, we shall be dealing with a period that extends from the eighth to the fourth century B.C., which covers the pre-Deuteronomist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly redactional periods.

This work is composed of three chapters. The first will deal with the Prophets of the eighth century B.C.; the second, with the Major Prophets; and the third, with the Psalms. Before the analysis of specific texts, a brief introduction about the book under study is presented. The analysis will be carried out on the passages which employ the term *midbār* (desert). In the case of the Psalms, however, we shall analyze the whole psalm under study, and not only the verses that contain *midbār*.

It is true that there are other terms for desert used in the OT —e.g., *śmāmāh*, *borbāh*, **rābāh*—; nevertheless, we have decided to analyze only the verses that contain *midbār* because this term is used much more frequently than all the others and is usually the word used to refer to the desert associated with the Israelite wandering after the exodus from Egypt. Furthermore, the NT term for «desert», ἡ ἔρημος, is closely linked to *midbār*.

Before going on with the study, we would like to express our gratitude to the Department of Sacred Scripture of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Navarre for letting us take part in this area of research. We owe special appreciation to Dr. Francisco Varo, the director of this doctoral thesis, who patiently guided us through the rigors of scientific investigation, and to Dr. Santiago Ausín for his valuable suggestions.



NOTES OF THE INTRODUCTION

1. Cf. U.W. MAUSER, *Christ in the Wilderness* (SBT 39; London, 1963), 15.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Cf. S. AUSÍN, «La composición del Pentateuco. Estado actual de la investigación crítica», *ScrTh* 23 (1991) 171-183; F. GARCÍA-LOPEZ, «De la antigua a la nueva crítica literaria del Pentateuco», *EstB* 52 (1994) 7-35.





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ABBREVIATIONS*

AB	<i>The Anchor Bible</i> (W.F. ALBRIGHT AND D.N. FREEDMAN, eds.)
ActOr	<i>Acta Orientalia</i>
AnBib	<i>Analecta Biblica</i>
AsiaJT	<i>Asian Journal of Theology</i>
ASTI	<i>Annual of the [Jerusalem] Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATD	<i>Das Alte Testament Deutsch</i>
BETL	<i>Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BKAT	<i>Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament</i>
BS	<i>Biblische Studien</i>
BTr	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CamB	<i>The Cambridge Bible</i>
CB	<i>Century Bible</i>
CBQ	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCHSA	<i>Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture</i> (B. ORCHARD, et. al., eds.)
CuadJer	<i>Cuadernos Bíblicos de la Institución S. Jerónimo</i>
DB	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible</i>
DBS	<i>Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible</i>
EB	<i>Enchiridion Biblicum</i>
EstB	<i>Estudios Bíblicos</i>
EstF	<i>Estudios Franciscanos</i>

* Includes only the abbreviations for journals and series.

FAT	<i>Forschungen zum Alten Testament</i>
HAT	<i>Handbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
HSAT	<i>Die Heilige Schrift del Alten Testaments</i>
HarvThR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IB	<i>The Interpreter's Bible</i> (G.A. BUTTRICK, et. al., eds.)
ICC	<i>The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament</i> (S.R. DRIVER, et. al., eds.)
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
IEB	<i>Introducción al Estudio de la Biblia</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal, American Academy of Religion</i>
JBC	<i>The Jerome Biblical Commentary</i> (R.E. BROWN, J.A. FITZMYER AND R.E. MURPHY, eds.)
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JNwSL	<i>Journal of Northwestern Semitic Languages</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
NBE	<i>Nueva Biblia Española</i>
NCB	<i>New Century Bible</i>
OTL	<i>Old Testament Library</i>
PCB	<i>Peake's Commentary on the Bible</i> (M. BLACK AND H.H. ROWLEY, eds.)
PSBC	<i>Biblia comentada</i> (PROFESORES DE SALAMANCA, ed.)
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RevQ	<i>Revue de Qumrân</i>
RivB	<i>Rivista Biblica Italiana</i>
SB	<i>La Sacra Bibbia</i>
SBT	<i>Studies in Biblical Theology</i>
ScEsp	<i>Science et Esprit</i>
ScrTh	<i>Scripta Theologica</i>
TDig	<i>Theology Digest</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTS	<i>Vetus Testamentum Supplements</i>
WMANT	<i>Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>



THE DESERT IN THE TRADITION OF ISRAEL

THE DESERT TRADITION IN THE PSALMS

A good number of psalms make references to a time of Israel in the desert. Psalms 78, 95, and 106 deal extensively with this theme, recalling mainly those events which emphasize Israel's rebellion in the desert. These psalms paint a negative picture of the wilderness period, portraying it as an uninterrupted series of iniquities (rebellion, testing of God, murmuring, faithlessness), and employing it as the basis for warning the present generation (cf. Pss 78 and 95). It is true that there are also psalms (hymns of praise) which present the positive aspect of Israel's desert period, recalling the saving deeds of God (cf. Pss 105 and 136). However, in these psalms, the reference to the wilderness time is very short compared to the emphasis given to the other themes (i.e., Creation, the Patriarchs, the Egyptian period). It is indeed surprising that, in general, the hymns of praise have not found YHWH's deeds in the desert suitable examples of His power¹.

In the present chapter, we shall analyze Pss 78, 95, 105, 106, and 136 for the reasons given above. We shall also include in this study Ps 135 —although it does not explicitly mention the desert (*midbār*) period— for its striking similarity to Ps 136. For each psalm, the analysis will not cover only the passages which contain *midbār* but, rather, the whole psalm itself.

A. PSALM 78

Psalm 78 has been included by Hermann Gunkel among what he termed «Mixed Poems» (*Mischungen* or *Mischgedichte*), admitting

that it cannot be simply classified in any of the categories he had defined². Since then, a number of scholars have classified it as a historical psalm because it takes the significant events of Israel's saving history (*Heilsgeschichte*) as its subject³. The psalm, however, is more interested in the interpretation of history than in the recapitulation of past events. It uses the old traditions of the exodus from Egypt, the desert wandering, and the entrance into the Promised Land —«the riddles from of old»— to teach a religious lesson. For this reason, some authors, beginning with S. Mowinkel, have classified Ps 78 as a didactic psalm⁴. Taking all of this into consideration, A.F. Campbell classifies this psalm as a «didactic psalm concerned with the theological interpretation of history», pointing out that its focus is not the chronological history from the Patriarchs to the possession of the Land but rather the «paradigm of rebellion in the desert, which becomes a constant behavior pattern for Israel»⁵.

The psalm's connection with the temple cult is held by a good number of authors even though there is no internal evidence of such relation. They believe, however, that the psalm's contents would make it suitable for recitation at one of the festivals⁶. A. Gelin offers an insight on the relationship between history and worship, which seems to be present in Ps 78:

These wonders are the historical acts which launched the history of Israel: the exodus from Egypt, the desert of the Covenant, the entrance into the Promised Land... But this history is not a lifeless fossil. History lives again in the present of worship, history is made eternal, history is a mystery... The essential thing was to make the people understand that history is «reactualized», that it is not something past and gone, and that it is the liturgical «today» which allows us to grasp history... In worship we find history as a sign of God⁷.

There are basically two theories for the date of the psalm. Some scholars place it during the period from the tenth to the eighth century B.C.⁸, considering the following principal points: (i) there is no clear reference to the fall of the Northern Kingdom and the ensuing exile (722-721 B.C.)⁹; (ii) there is a declaration of the Salomonic temple's inviolability¹⁰; and (iii) the Davidic dynasty is still ruling in Jerusalem. Others, on the other hand, opt for a date during the Deuteronomist period¹¹, pointing out traces of Deuteronomist influence in the text.

1. Analysis of the Psalm

For purposes of analysis, we have divided the psalm into the following parts:

a. Solemn Introduction	vv.	1-8
b. The Ephraimites' Cowardice		9-16
c. The Demand for Food		17-31
d. The People's Continuous Infidelity in the Desert		32-55
e. Infidelity in the Land		56-72

a) *Solemn Introduction (vv. 1-8)*

In a tone typical of wisdom poetry, the psalmist begins by stating his desire of passing on to the present generation what the fathers have heard about «the glorious deeds of YHWH, and his might, and the wonders which he has wrought». This idea of reminding the younger generation of YHWH's intervention in favor of the People of Israel abounds in the Book of Deuteronomy as a divine commandment¹². This could be taken as a suggestion of a possible Deuteronomist influence upon the psalm's redaction.

The psalmist goes on to remind the fathers of their obligation to teach their children the law that YHWH gave to their ancestors (v. 5)¹³. We note that the names used are «Jacob» and «Israel», implying a reference to the Northern Kingdom. Are we here before a tradition which holds that the law was given only to the tribes of the Northern Kingdom? Consequently, do we have before us a tradition that claims that YHWH's chosen people are only those of the Northern Kingdom? The origin of the notion of election is not clear, but what is commonly accepted is that from the seventh century B.C. onwards, this idea was applied to all Israel by the Deuteronomists¹⁴. One suggestion put forward is that the idea of election might have been popular in an unknown circle where it could have been an old idea by the time the Deuteronomists used it for their interests¹⁵. Another possibility presented is that the notion was a fundamental part of the David-Zion tradition in the Southern Kingdom where it was utilized extensively by the Deuteronomists¹⁶. A further suggestion is that the election-covenant faith had its ori-

gin in the Northern Kingdom, especially in the Ephraim-Mannaseh tribes¹⁷. Do we then have a case of reappropriation? Did the election tradition have its origin in one tribe (i.e., Ephraim) and was later on applied to the whole Israelite nation (by the Deuteronomist circle, for example)?

The psalmist, thus, makes his intention clear: to remind the present generation of «the glorious deeds of YHWH» so that they do not repeat the «stubborn and rebellious» ways of their ancestors. It is interesting to note that the ancestors' generation is described in Deuteronomy with similar terms¹⁸.

b) *The Ephraimites' Cowardice (vv. 9-16)*

With the introduction done, the psalmist deals with the father's disobedience, centering the accusation on the «sons of Ephraim», for their having turned back from battle and for not keeping God's laws (vv. 9-10). This is a difficult passage. Some authors attempt to assign it a historical situation. W.S. McCullough, for example, suggests that «sons of Ephraim» denotes the northern tribes (making reference to the use of «Ephraim» in v. 67), and that they are either made responsible for the people's refusal to attack Canaan (cf. Num 13:25 - 14:4), or accused of not carrying out the subsequent invasion as God had commanded (cf. Judg 1:22 - 2:2)¹⁹. C.A. Briggs and E.G. Briggs, on the other hand, believe that this reference to some historical event in which there was disobedience to YHWH through a retreat from battle, is a conjecture that resulted from a copyist's transposition of a vocable²⁰. The gravity of the infidelity is emphasized, in v. 10, by the accusation of non-fulfillment of God's laws.

However, the infidelity is somehow extenuated by the people's forgetting the marvels that God had done. The psalmist goes on to recall these divine interventions. Although he begins by remembering «the marvels in the land of Egypt, [in] the field of Zoan²¹,» he does not specify which ones. What follows, on the other hand, is the recalling of miracles wrought by God in the desert: (i) the parting and crossing of the sea (v. 13); (ii) the pillar of cloud and of fire which accompany the people (v. 14); (iii) abundant water from the rocks (vv. 15-16); (iv) the provision of manna (vv. 23-25); and (v) the provision of birds (vv. 26-28).

All these miracles and signs are present in the Exodus accounts, but not in the same order, as can be seen in the following table:

Ps 78:	No.	Miracle or Sign	No.	Ex
13	1	the crossing of the sea	2	14:22ff
14	2	the cloud and the fiery glow	1	13:21
15-16	3	the water from the rock	5	17:1ff
23-25	4	the manna from heaven	4	16:13b
26-28	5	the rain of birds	3	16:13a

Ps 78:13 is expressed in phrases very similar to those in the Exodus narrative. The first part, «he divided the sea and made them pass through», calls to mind the phrase of Ex 14:16 («stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it for the sons of Israel to walk through»); while the second part, «He made the waters stand up as a heap», is strikingly similar to Ex 15:18, which is part of the victory song of Moses after the sea crossing («the waters stood up as a heap»). God's personal leadership is represented, in v. 14, by «a cloud by day» and «a fiery glow at night». The same representation exists in the theophanic pillar, in Ex 13:21, which changes its appearance as needed for manifestation.

Verses 15-16 seem to be a poetic rendering of the miracle narrated in Ex 17:1-7. The latter specifies that the miracle took place in the valley of Rephidim, after the grumbling of the people²². Because of the people's complaining attitude, the place was called Massah and Meribah, that is, «trial and contention». In the psalm no mention is made of this murmuring, giving the impression that the provision of water was purely God's initiative. It is interesting to note that the imagery suggested by this passage is very similar to that presented in Is 48:21²³.

c) *The Demand for Food (vv. 17-31)*

The first mention of the people's murmuring in the desert follows the description of the miracle of the water from the rock. It is considered an offense in much the same way as the previous action mentioned in vv. 9-10. It consists in testing God by «asking food according to their appetite» (v. 18), by showing discontent with what God

had already given them. The offense is emphasized by saying that the people spoke against God (v. 19a) and by recalling the story of the provision of water (v. 20). This reference to the people's complaint calls to mind the episode narrated in Ex 16:1-3.

The theme of Israel's testing God will come up again in vv. 41 and 56. This has led some scholars to think of substantial Deuteronomist influence on Ps 78²⁴. A.F. Campbell, however, believes that the testing motif in the psalm does not come from the Deuteronomist tradition²⁵. He points out that while the Deuteronomist testing motif is closely associated with the murmuring tradition in Massah (Meribah)²⁶, Ps 78, on the other hand, «is not in the murmuring tradition²⁷, and it recounts a wilderness tradition of abundant water; and, furthermore, the testing of God in Psalm 78 is not concerned with water, but is located in the demand for food»²⁸. We think that although the testing motif in Ps 78 does not perfectly fit the Deuteronomist mold; nevertheless, Deuteronomist influence in some form or another cannot be outrightly denied.

The first reaction of YHWH is anger against their unbelief (vv. 21-22). The objects of the divine ire are «Jacob» and «Israel», the same names used in v. 5 to refer to the law established by YHWH. There is no mention of this anger in Exodus. It is present, however, in Numbers (11:1-3), and serves as an ethiological explanation for the name of the place, Taberah²⁹:

And the people complained in the hearing of YHWH about their misfortunes; and when YHWH heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of YHWH burned among them, and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. Then the people cried to Moses; and Moses prayed to YHWH, and the fire abated. So the name of the place was called Taberah, because the fire of YHWH burned among them.

(Num 11:1-3)

The psalmist then goes on to describe the two miracles which are YHWH's response to the demand for food of the people. First, he describes the manna as heavenly grain falling like rain, a description that is similar to that of Ex 16:4 and Num 11:9. The manna is considered as food of the angels: «the bread of the mighty», where «the mighty» refers to the angels, as in Ps 103:20. It came in such abun-

dance, more than they could eat, that they came to distaste it. This situation is described in Num 11:4-6. The people are so fed up with the manna («there is nothing at all but this manna to look at») that they begin to crave for meat. We note that in Ps 78 there is no mention of this new murmuring after the giving of the manna.

The description of the raining down of fowl upon the people's camp calls to mind the narration of the quail episode in Exodus (16:13a) and Numbers (11:31). The psalmist's description of the two miracles suggests that they occurred at about the same time. This is similar to that of Exodus, with a slight difference; in the latter, the quails came before the manna:

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning dew lay round about the camp. And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoarfrost on the ground.

(Ex 16:13-14)

The Numbers narration, on the other hand, has the same order as Ps 78. Num 11:7-9, however, seems to imply that the quails came much later than the manna, at least late enough for the people to tire of the heavenly bread. Furthermore, the psalmist makes no mention of the people's grumbling for meat, as is narrated in Num 11:4-6.

Quite suddenly —«while the food was still in their mouths»—, God slew the strongest and the choicest of Israel, as punishment for their rebellion (i.e., for murmuring and demanding for food). There is no mention of this radical action of God in Exodus. On the other hand, in Numbers we find a description of such a happening in much the same terms as Ps 78:

While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of YHWH was kindled against the people, and YHWH smote the people with a very great plague. Therefore, the name of that place was called Kib-roth-hartaavah³⁰, because there they buried the people who had the craving.

(Num 11:33-34)

The following table will help to compare the accounts of Ps 78, Ex 16, and Num 11:

Event	Ps 78	Ex 16	Num 11
murmuring for food	18	1-3	—
divine ire	21-22	—	1-3
the manna	23-26	13b	7-9
murmuring for meat	—	—	4-6
the birds	27-29	13a	31-32
divine punishment	30-31	—	33-34

Furthermore, we see that the manna-quail relationship is different in each of the three accounts. In Ex 16, the concentration is upon the manna (and, subsequently, the theme of the Sabbath). In Num 11, on the contrary, the main concern is the quail episode. Finally, in Ps 78, the manna and quail accounts are told in a parallel fashion. This even-handed treatment of both episodes could suggest that the psalm is not dependent upon the Pentateuchal traditions (as presented in Ex 16 and Num 11)³¹.

In vv. 17-31, the psalmist describes the people's rebellion, the two miracles, and the consequent punishment, showing, thus, his purpose of warning his generation «that they should not be like their fathers», that they should not repeat their offenses.

d) *The People's Continuous Infidelity in the Desert (vv. 32-55)*

Verse 32, which opens the description of another series of offenses of the people in the desert, is very similar to v. 17, which begins the part that deals with the demand for food in the desert. The offenses consist in disbelief in God's power to do wonders, very similar to the lack of trust manifested in vv. 19-20. What follows, though, is not a presentation of concrete events involved in rebellion and punishment, but an abstract and conceptual discourse.

God's reaction, although couched in poetic terms («so he made their days vanish like a breath, and their years in terror» [v. 33]), is drastic: He kills the sinners. In the face of this, the people respond by repenting and seeking God³². The divine punishment visited upon them makes them remember God, to whom the psalmist applies the titles «their Rock»³³, «Elyon», and «their Redeemer»³⁴. However, the people's repentance is not true, and their false professions of fidelity and obedience are but a manifestation of their infidelity to

God's covenant. Some authors see in Ps 78 the Deuteronomist sequence of sin, punishment, repentance, and salvation³⁵. This is not, however, the main concern of the psalm. It aims, rather, to contrast Israel's attitude with that of YHWH. Furthermore, as A.F. Campbell points out, the repentance of the people is followed not by divine rescue or favor, but by their own infidelity³⁶:

But they flattered him with their mouths;
they lied to him with their tongues.
Their heart was not steadfast toward him;
they were not true to his covenant.

(Ps 78:36-37)

Once again, the covenant is emphasized just as previously in vv. 5, 7, and 10.

Verses 38-39 paint a different picture of God's attitude towards His sinning people. He does not destroy them, but, rather, forgives them and restrains His anger. The reason given in the psalm is God's recognition of man as frail and perishable: «He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again.» This reason is strikingly similar to that presented in the Book of Hosea: «I will not execute my fierce anger, I will not destroy Ephraim: for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come to destroy»³⁷. The restraint of the divine ire also appears in the Pentateuch —where the motive is Moses' intervention³⁸— and in some prophetic books —where the restraint is for the sake of YHWH's Name³⁹.

Then, quite surprisingly, what follows is a recalling of the plagues of Egypt. This has led some scholars to think that vv. 40-51 is a late insertion. C.A. Briggs and E.G. Briggs, for example, believe that it is a «pentameter extract from an older poem...which alone this author seems to have known»⁴⁰.

This part opens with an affirmation of the people's continuous testing of the «Holy One of Israel»⁴¹ and their forgetting the miracles he did in Egypt. The divine title used here is another Isaian favorite: «the Holy One of Israel» is used 24 times in the First and Second Isaiah, and only 7 times in the rest of the OT.

The psalm describes six (or seven, as the case may be) plagues, all of which are also found in the Exodus narrative, but in a different order and with slight differences, as the following table shows:

Ex	No.	Plague	No.	Ps 78:
7:20-21	1	the water of the Nile turned to blood [the rivers turned to blood]	1	44
8:6	2	frogs	3	45b
8:17	3	gnats	—	—
8:24	4	swarms of flies	2	45a
9:6-7	5	severe plague upon cattle...and flocks	—	—
9:10-11	6	boils	—	—
9:23-26	7	hail, thunder, and fire [hail, frost, and thunderbolts]	5	47-48
10:13-15	8	locusts [caterpillars and locusts]	4	46
10:22-23	9	darkness	—	—
12:29-30	10	death of Egyptian first-born	6	49-51

Some scholars think that the psalm also makes reference to the cattle plague, claiming that v. 48a should read «...their cattle to the pestilence» instead of «...their cattle to the hail». They reason that since «hail» (ברד) has already been referred to in v. 47, the text must be faulty and must read «pestilence» (דבר). This is the disease that attacked the «Egyptians» cattle, in Ex 9:6-7⁴². If this should be the case, then the psalm would include seven plagues. In a recent study, J. Day points out that Ps 78 cites seven plagues of the J account, and adds that the psalmist did not have knowledge of neither the P nor the E source⁴³.

It is interesting to note that in the psalm, the last plague is carried out through «a company of angels of evil things». In Ex 11:4; 12:12, 23, 29, YHWH Himself goes through Egypt, although there is a reference to a «destroyer» in 12:23.

The plagues lead to the exit of the people from Egypt, the whole initiative being God's: «he led forth his people»; «he guided them»; and «he led them in safety». The simile employed in the psalm («like sheep» and «like a flock») calls to mind the description of the return from Exile, in Is 40:

[YHWH] will feed his flock like a shepherd,
he will gather the lambs in his arms,

he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

(Is 40:11)

Only one of the important events in the desert wandering is mentioned, that of the drowning of the enemies, perhaps to complement v. 13, the passing of the people through the parted waters of the sea.

What follows immediately is the reference to the conquest and settlement of the land. Most probably, «holy border» points to the boundary of the holy land, and «mountain» refers not only to Mt. Zion, but also to the mountainous land, which is characteristic of Canaan⁴⁴.

e) *Infidelity in the Land* (vv. 56-72)

Already in the Promised Land, the people continue with their sinful ways, as is affirmed in v. 56, in a manner similar to that of vv. 17-18a, which open the part concerning the rebellion in the desert. The present transgressions consist of worship at the ancient high places⁴⁵ instead of at Jerusalem, and the use of images in the worship of YHWH:

For they provoked him to anger with their high places;
they moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

(Ps 78:58)

This is a constant Deuteronomist charge against Israel. Do we then have here a clear manifestation of the Deuteronomist influence? Or are we before a glossator's addition?

In response to the people's infidelity, God rejects them. The object of such rejection is «Israel». Some authors have taken this as a suggestion that the psalm is an attempt to discredit the exodus election tradition of the Northern Kingdom (i.e., the Ephraimite clans) in order to establish the David-Zion election tradition of the Southern Kingdom⁴⁶. The rejection of the Northern Kingdom's claim is further emphasized in vv. 60-61, which speak of God's forsaking of the «tabernacle of Shiloh», an early center of worship, 32-40 kms. north of Jerusalem, where the Ark was deposited⁴⁷. They also seem to make reference to the capture of the Ark by the Philistines⁴⁸:

and delivered his power to captivity,
his glory to the hand of the foe.

(Ps 78:61)

What follows —vv. 62-64— is a poetic representation of the defeat of the Israelites in the hands of the Philistines, an event recounted in 1 Sam 4.

In the midst of this disaster, YHWH comes to the rescue of His people by defeating the enemies. He is portrayed as one who awakes from a wine-induced sleep:

And the Lord awoke like a sleeper,
like a strong man shouting on account of wine;
And he struck his enemies on the rear,
he gave them everlasting shame⁴⁹.

(Ps 78:65-66)

This description of YHWH is rare in the OT, where He is generally considered as always awake, aware of all that happens in the cosmos. Rarer still is the portrayal of YHWH as drunk with wine. This passage must then be taken as a metaphor. As punishment for the people's infidelity, YHWH leaves them in the hands of the enemy, in apparent inattentiveness to their pleas. Thus, for them, it would seem that YHWH had gone to sleep⁵⁰. When finally He rescues them from the enemy, they picture Him as having awoken from His slumber and come to their aid⁵¹.

Some scholars believe that the image of God sleeping and awaking has its origin in Ancient Near Eastern practices and motifs. An interesting theory traces its roots to the Canaanite grieving banquet *mrzḥ*, in which drunkenness takes on a sacred character⁵². YHWH's wine-induced sleep implied in v. 65 is seen as the result of His celebrating a *mrzḥ* in order to grieve for His people. S. Cavalletti, the proponent of this theory, recognizes Jewish orthodoxy's rejection of practices connected with the cult to the dead, where wine and drunkenness play an important role. She reconciles her theory with this fact by suggesting an early date for Ps 78, a date in which this Canaanite practice was still rampant in the Near Eastern world.

Another proposal traces the origin of the biblical images of the slumbering God to «a hitherto unrecognized near eastern motif of

the sleeping god»⁵³. This motif existed in the ancient societies of Egypt, Canaan, Mesopotamia, and Babylon, where it was an affirmation of the deity's status as the supreme ruler of the whole cosmos. His capacity for undisturbed sleep symbolized his absolute dominion. B.F. Batto, who proposes this theory, believes that the portrayal of YHWH as asleep was a biblical appropriation of said Near Eastern motif. The image of YHWH sleeping is then a symbol of His absolute dominion over heaven and earth. Furthermore, the author affirms that the people's appeal to YHWH to «wake up», «far from a slur on the effectiveness of divine rule, was actually an extension of Israel's active faith in YHWH's universal rule, even in the midst of gross injustice and manifest evil»⁵⁴.

What is clear in v. 65 is that YHWH changes His attitude towards His people and acts on their behalf against the enemies. Verse 66 calls to mind the tumors inflicted upon the Philistines when they had detained the Ark (cf. 1 Sam 5:6ff).

The theory that Ps 78 was an attempt to discredit the Northern Kingdom and to provide a basis for the Southern Kingdom claim seems to find further support in vv. 67-69. This would be the case only when a Joseph/Ephraim-Northern Kingdom and Judah/Zion-Southern Kingdom identification is assumed. The rejection of «the tent of Joseph» and «the tribe of Ephraim» is a consequence of the rejection of Shiloh (v. 60). This rejection is countered by the election of another tribe, Judah, and a new sanctuary in «the mountain of Zion». The latter must be a reference to the southern part of the eastern hill of Jerusalem in which the Temple (of Solomon) stood.

The election of the tribe of Judah carries with it the choice of a new king, David, who is given the title «his servant». «The Servant of YHWH» is a usual term for persons in the OT who have the vocation to work for YHWH for the good of the Chosen People. It is used to refer to the Patriarchs, to Josue, to David⁵⁵, and to the prophets. The use of this title in Deuteronomy, Josue, Judges, and Chronicles strongly suggests that it is a Deuteronomist idea. Thus, its use in this psalm could point to Deuteronomist influence. The Davidic dynasty, represented here by David, has the vocation of being the shepherd of «his people Jacob and Israel his heritage». Contrary to what vv. 5 and 21 suggest, «Jacob» and «Israel» in v. 71 refer not to the Northern Kingdom alone, but to the whole People of Israel.

2. Recapitulation of the Analysis

We have seen that Ps 78 is a didactic psalm which uses the important events in the history of Israel (concretely, the plagues in Egypt and the miracles in the desert) to contrast the rebellious ways of Israel with the fidelity of YHWH, with the aim of warning the present generation against falling into the «stubborn and rebellious» ways of their ancestors, and of exhorting them to the fulfillment of the Covenant.

Given that the events recounted in the psalm are similar to those in the Pentateuchal accounts, not a few scholars and authors have attempted to show its dependence upon Pentateuchal traditions. We have seen, however, that the plague and the desert accounts in the psalm are quite different from those of Exodus and Numbers. Psalm 78 mentions only six (or seven) of the plagues described in Exodus, and in a different order. Likewise, there are differences in the manner of narrating the desert miracles and signs, not only in the sequence, but also in the terminology. These differences are more evident in the manna and the quail accounts of Ps 78, Ex 16, and Num 11. This has led us to think that Ps 78 must have been composed at a time when the Pentateuchal traditions were not yet well defined⁵⁶. This could well explain why the psalm includes only six (or seven) plagues, and why the sequence of events in the psalm's plague and desert accounts differ from that of the Pentateuch.

In several points of the analysis, the question of Deuteronomist influence has also cropped up. Some scholars claim that Ps 78 includes themes which seem to point to substantial Deuteronomist influence. Among these are the motif of testing God, the sin-punishment-repentance-salvation sequence, the accusation of worship outside of Jerusalem, the election-upon-rejection sequence, and the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty. On closer study, however, we have seen that although these themes typical of Deuteronomist thought are reflected in the psalm; nevertheless, they are treated in quite a different manner. Thus, whereas the Deuteronomist testing motif is linked to the demand for water in Massah and Meribah (i.e., the murmuring tradition), the motif of testing God in Ps 78 is found within the framework of the demand for food. Furthermore, although the theme of repentance is present in the psalm, it is followed

not by divine rescue —as in the typical Deuteronomist sequence— but rather by the people's infidelity once again.

In the light of the above analysis, we cannot deny neither the presence of elements in the psalm which seem to reflect Deuteronomist thought nor the fact that they do not follow exactly the Deuteronomist concepts (e.g., the difference of treatment of the testing motif and of repentance). Should a pre-exilic redaction date for Ps 78 be accepted, then these elements would be the remote beginnings of Deuteronomist theology. On the other hand, should a sixth-century date be held, then these elements would suggest a Deuteronomist redaction based on anterior material which was already old at that time. Furthermore, should the redaction during the Deuteronomist period be assumed, then it would have been at a time when the Deuteronomist theology was not yet well-defined.

The passages of Ps 78 that refer to a desert period of Israel suggest that the psalmist knew of a desert tradition similar to —but not the same as— that reflected in the Pentateuchal accounts (i.e., in Exodus and Numbers). He presents the desert as the framework for contrasting Israel's attitude with that of God. The desert is the place of God's intervention on behalf of His people: the parting of the sea, His guidance through the pillars of cloud and of fire, and the provision of water and food. In strong contrast, it is also the place of the people's murmuring, sinning, and rebelling against God (cf. vv. 17-20, 32, and 40-42). As a consequence of the latter, the desert is also the place for divine punishment (cf. vv. 30-31 and 33-34). Thus, we believe that a negative sense of Israel's desert period predominates in Ps 78. As we have seen above, this emphasis on sin and punishment could be a reflection of Deuteronomist thought. We further believe that this negative panorama is in line with the psalmist's aim, which is to warn the present generation lest they commit the same offenses as their ancestors and suffer the same punishments.

B. PSALM 95

There is abundant scholarly discussion concerning the parts and purpose of Ps 95. A review of such literature shows the general agreement among scholars that the psalm has two parts and it was written for a liturgical purpose⁵⁷.

Most of these scholars divide the psalm into vv. 1-7c and vv. 7d-11. There is a variety of terminology used; however, in general, the two parts could be described as a hymn and an oracle. Other authors divide the psalm into a doxological and a prophetic part; hymnic and didactic; epiphany and covenant renewal; an invitation to worship and a warning against disobedience. Although some scholars believe that Ps 95 was composed of two originally independent poems; nevertheless, the great majority maintain the psalm's original unity.

In general, most exegetes relate the psalm to Israelite worship, although there is no agreement concerning the occasion. The diverse opinions include the Sabbath, the Feast of the Tabernacles, the autumnal festival, the «enthronement» or New Year. In like manner, there is no agreement whether «it is pre-exilic relating to the temple court, or early post-exilic relating to temple courts»⁵⁸.

1. Analysis of the Psalm

We shall analyze Ps 95 in two parts, following the generally accepted division discussed above. Although there is abundant literature that deals with the psalm, we have found few recent works (i.e., 1970's onward). In this analysis, we have made reference mainly to two articles, namely, G.H. Davies, «Psalm 95», ZAW 85 (1973) 183-195; and M. Girard, «The Literary Structure of Psalm 95», TD 30 (1982) 55-58.

a) *A Hymnic Call to Worship (vv. 1-7c)*

The first part of the psalm contains two calls to worship presented in the double pattern of invitation and motive (which begins with *kî*, «for», and continues in the form of an embryonic creed⁵⁹). These calls to worship are as follows:

First Call	Renewed Call
Invitation	
1a Come, let us sing to YHWH	6a Come in, let us prostrate ourselves and bow down;
1b let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation!	
2a Let us come before his face with thanksgiving;	6b let us kneel before the face of YHWH, our maker.
2b let us shout for joy to him with songs of praise!	
Motive	
3a For YHWH is a great God,	7a For he is our God,
3b a great king above all gods.	
4a In his hands are the depths of the earth;	7b and we are the people of his pasture
4b and the heights of the mountains are his.	7c and the flock of his hand.
5a The sea is his, and he made it,	
5b and his hands have shaped the dry land.	

The parallelism is obvious, as the following points suggest: (i) both begin with imperatives which are virtual synonyms (*y/k* «come» and *bw'* «come in»); (ii) both imperatives are followed by a series of cohortatives; (iii) both invitations refer to the face (or presence) of YHWH; (iv) the motive of each case begins with «for» and refers to «God» (*'ēl*); and (v) both end similarly: «hands» (v. 5b) and «hand» (v. 7c).

In v. 1, YHWH is called «Rock of our salvation». This title seems to suggest Deuteronomist influence, given that the word «rock» is repeatedly used for YHWH in the Book of Deuteronomy (32: 13, 15, 18, 30, 31). G.H. Davies, studying the application of this term to YHWH in the psalms, affirms that such references generally «point to a southern tradition» and claims that this word «has a reference to Jerusalem, and to that great Rock, formerly beneath either the Holy of Holies or the altar of burnt offering»⁶⁰. He concludes that Ps 95 must have been used for worship in Jerusalem.

A good number of scholars have proposed different theories for the double call to worship. R. Kittel believes that vv. 1-5 was a hymn sung as a processional by the community between the city and the temple, and vv. 6-7c was an invitation sung by a priestly choir at the temple gate directed to the procession⁶¹. H. Schmidt, on the other hand, thinks that two choirs were concerned —each singing one of the two parts of the hymn— who met at the temple gates and entered together to worship⁶². Still another theory is that offered by E.A. Leslie, who affirms that vv. 1-5 were sung by worshippers on their way from the temple gate to the outer court, while vv. 6-7c were sung during their movement from the outer to the inner court⁶³.

It is interesting to note that in vv. 1-7c, there is an intertwining of the themes of YHWH as Saviour and of YHWH as Creator. This is made clearer by the chiasmic structure of the passage, as C.B. Riding points out⁶⁴:

- A Let us worship our Saviour (1. 2),
- B For He is the Creator of everything (3-5);
- B' Let us worship our Maker (6),
- A' For He is our Saviour (7a-c).

Riding justifies making v. 7a-c synonymous with «He is our Saviour» by arguing that in Lev 26:12, 13 and Jer 11:4, the phrase «I will be your God, and you shall be my people» is «within the context of the Exodus, YHWH's greatest act of salvation for Israel»⁶⁵. He goes on to affirm that although the chiasmic form highlights the fact that YHWH is both Saviour and Creator; nevertheless, the arrangement of the verses suggests that YHWH as Saviour takes precedence over YHWH as Creator.

We agree with Riding's justification concerning v. 7a-c and with his idea that YHWH as both Saviour and Creator is presented in vv. 1-7c. We do not, however, share his opinion that the more important idea is that of YHWH as Saviour. On the contrary, we believe that what is stressed more is the figure of YHWH as Creator, as can be gathered from the arrangement of vv. 1-7c and the central idea of the verses that follow (7d-10). As Riding correctly points out, the hymn has the form ABB'A'. In Hebrew chiasmic structures, however, the interior element is usually the more important idea. Thus, in

this case, it would be logical to think that the B-element is the more important; that is, the idea of YHWH as Creator takes precedence over that of YHWH as Saviour. This is further supported by the fact that vv. 7d-10 center on YHWH's «work» (v. 9c), as we shall see in the second part of the analysis. We believe, therefore, that vv. 1-7c emphasize the idea that YHWH not only *created* the universe, but also *made* Israel His people.

b) *An Oracular Warning (vv. 7d-11)*

The second part of Ps 95 is an oracular warning against Israel's hardness of heart despite the saving deeds of YHWH. This message is put across through a concentric structure of vv. 7d-10, centered on the idea of YHWH's work (v. 9c). As we noted above, this emphasis on the divine work is further support for our affirmation that in this psalm, the idea of YHWH as Creator is stressed more than that of YHWH as Saviour. Taking into consideration M. Girard's scheme⁶⁶, we have the following structure for vv. 7d-10⁶⁷:

A	If today you would <i>listen to his voice!</i>	[7d]
B	Harden not your <i>heart</i> as at Meribah,	[8a]
C	as on the day at Massah in the desert,	[8b]
	when your <i>fathers</i> tested me,	[9a]
	and put me to the proof,	[9b]
D	though they had seen my <i>work</i> .	[9c]
C'	For forty years I loathed [that] <i>generation</i> ,	[10a]
B'	and said: They are a people who err in <i>heart</i> ,	[10b]
A'	and they do not <i>know my ways</i> .	[10c]

It would be logical to take D as the central idea. But, to what does «work» (*p'l*) refer? G.H. Davies thinks that it could mean a concrete event in the desert, that is, the provision of water at Meribah, or could describe the escape from Egypt and ensuing events which marked the beginning of Israel's desert period⁶⁸. We believe, however, that there is no need to look outside of the psalm itself. «Work» could very well refer to YHWH's creation of the universe (vv. 4-5) and of the people (vv. 6b-7), described in the first part of the psalm⁶⁹.

The appeal is made first through a reference to a specific event (vv. 8-9b), then through a more generalized description of the «forty

years» (v. 10). The initial reference is to the Meribah-Massah incident. The mention of Meribah calls to mind the contention concerning the lack of water in the desert, as narrated in Num 20:1-13 and referred to in Ps 81:8. Both are Meribah passages only, and concerned only with water⁷⁰. Dt 33:8, which, on the other hand, refers to both Massah and Meribah, also makes a connection between the latter place name and «waters»⁷¹. The mention of Massah, however, suggests that Ps 95 goes beyond the Meribah water theme. In what does the Massah theme consist? This is shown by the verb which is closely linked to this place name, that is, *nsh*; «to test». This verb is used in Ps 95 (v. 9a), in the Massah passage Dt 6:16, and in the Meribah-Massah passages Ex 17:7 and Dt 33:8. All these texts show that the Massah theme is the testing of YHWH, and more specifically, the questioning of His presence, as can be gathered from Ex 17:7:

And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the contention of the sons of Israel, and because they tested (*nsh*) YHWH, saying: Is YHWH in our midst or not?⁷².

Thus, the reference to the Meribah-Massah incident in this psalm is used not only to recall the contention concerning the lack of water, but also the questioning of YHWH's presence amidst the people. G.H. Davies writes:

...in assessing the meaning of the historical illustration in these verses of Ps 95, the Meribah rebellious theme is insufficient. The Massah temptation theme must also be considered. The oracular warning is saying not only «Do not be rebellious as your fathers were about the waters of Meribah», but it is also saying «Do not question the presence of God here today, as your fathers questioned it at Massah»⁷³.

The appeal is then renewed with a reference to «forty years». Most probably, this is an allusion to the desert period of Israel after the exodus from Egypt. Num 14:33-34 specifies that the desert wandering would last forty years. Besides, this passage (Ps 95:10) comes after the reference to the Meribah-Massah incident, which occurred during that desert period. Furthermore, the psalmist's description of the erring generation is in keeping with that of the desert account in

Deuteronomy (32:5, 20). Moreover, YHWH's oath, in v. 11, is similar to that found in other passages which refer to Israel's time in the desert (cf. Num 14:30; Dt 1:34-35; Ps 106:26; Ez 20:15).

The appeal, made through the recalling of the people's bad behavior in the desert, is strengthened by the remembrance of the consequent divine punishment, which is the denial of entry into the Promised Land. The psalm, therefore, has the aim of warning the present generation not to follow their ancestors' rebellious ways lest the same punishment befall them. This seems to suggest that the psalm, in the form that has reached us, could have been redacted at a time when the people did not in fact possess the land, most probably during the exile period. However, this does not exclude the possibility of its pre-exilic origin, or of its containing traditions that date back to pre-exilic times⁷⁴.

2. Recapitulation of the Analysis

Like Ps 78, this psalm seeks to warn the people against falling into the unfaithful ways of their ancestors lest they suffer the same fate. This is achieved first by an invitation to recognize the work of YHWH-Creator, that is, the universe (vv. 4-5) and His people (v. 6b). Then, aware that mere witness and admiration of the divine work is not enough—as the desert generation's behavior shows (v. 9c: «though they had seen my work»)—, the psalmist makes an exhortation to fulfill the laws of YHWH, that is, to «listen to His voice» and «know His ways».

In order to present the disobedient ways of the people's ancestors, the psalmist refers to Israel's desert period after the exit from Egypt. First, he mentions the specific acts of contention in Meribah (connected with the lack of water) and of testing in Massah (concerning the presence of YHWH). Then, he makes the generalization that the people «erred in heart» during the whole desert period:

For forty years I loathed [that] generation,
and said: They are a people who err in heart,
and they do not know my ways.

(Ps 95:10)

Thus, once again, the negative sense of the desert period is presented. In fact, it seems that the desert generation is considered as the example of transgressors *par excellence*. The psalmist presents this period as a time not only of isolated rebellious acts, but also of continuous infidelity of the people. The negative sense is heightened by YHWH's loathing of His people—a sharp contrast to the intimate relationship presented in Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

C. PSALMS 105 AND 106

The idea of the desert as the place for both the saving wonders of YHWH in favor of His people and the rebellion of the latter, as is presented in Ps 78, is nowhere in the Psalter more clearly expounded than in the so-called «twin Psalms» 105 and 106. Both psalms include a part concerning Israel's desert sojourn. However, while Ps 105 emphasizes the miraculous interventions of YHWH and makes no reference to the people's sin, Ps 106, on the other hand, stresses Israel's infidelity and disobedience⁷⁵. For this reason, we shall study both psalms in one section.

1. Analysis of Psalm 105

Psalm 105, like Ps 78, is usually classified as an historical psalm. Although there is general agreement that it is a historical synopsis of the saving deeds of God; nevertheless, there are differences in opinion with respect to its original function. Some scholars affirm that it is a didactic hymn⁷⁶, while others hold that it was originally a cultic hymn of the covenant community⁷⁷.

The composition of Ps 105 in the form that has reached us—with all its glosses—is usually placed at a time before the redaction of the Books of Chronicles, given that 1 Chron 16:18-22 combines Pss 105:1-15; 96; and 106:1, 47. Now, these psalms appear in their present forms. This could then imply that Ps 105 (and 106) in its original form was much older than the Books of Chronicles.

Considering the strophic structure of Ps 105, we see that it could be divided—after the short introduction—into two parts, namely, (i) the movement of Israel from Canaan to Egypt (vv. 12-23) and (ii)

the movement from Egypt to Canaan (vv. 24-45). This observation has led us to the following structure, which we shall follow in the analysis of Ps 105⁷⁸:

Introduction		vv. 1-11
A. Invitation to Worship	1-6	
B. Identification of YHWH and His Promise of the Land	7-11	
I. Movement from Canaan to Egypt		vv. 12-23
A. The People Wandering in Canaan	12-15	
B. Joseph's Story	16-23	
II. Movement from Egypt to Canaan		vv. 24-45
A. The Plagues Story	24-38	
B. Israel in the Desert	39-41	
C. The Possession of the Land	42-45	

a) *Invitation to Worship (vv. 1-6)*

The psalm opens with an invitation to the «stock of Abraham» and the «sons of Jacob» to worship YHWH through thanksgiving, hymn-singing, and recalling of «the marvels he has done, his wonders, the judgments from his mouth». This has led some scholars to consider Ps 105 as a prototype of a cultic hymn⁷⁹. Others, on the other hand, believe that vv. 1-5 are a glossator's addition, the original psalm (beginning with v. 6) being a didactic hymn⁸⁰.

b) *Identification of YHWH and His Promise of the Land (vv. 7-11)*

The psalmist specifies that the praise is directed to YHWH, who established the covenant with the Patriarchs and promised them the land, being always faithful to His word, and whose authority is binding «over all the earth». There is a recalling of the pact YHWH made with Abraham, the oaths to Isaac⁸¹, and the statute established for Jacob, all of them related to YHWH's promise of a land.

This calls to mind the Genesis narratives concerning the promise made by YHWH to Abraham (cf. Gen 12:7; 15:7), the divine covenant established with the same Patriarch (cf. 15:18-21), the renewal of the divine promise with Isaac (cf. 26:3-4), and the same promise made to Jacob (cf. 28:13-15). There are slight differences, however. In Genesis, YHWH's promise to Abraham —which was renewed

with Isaac and Jacob— consists of progeny (cf. Gen 12:2a; 15:5), fame among all nations (cf. 12:2b-3), and land. In Ps 105, however, only the promise of the land is referred to. This is in keeping, perhaps, with the covenant established by YHWH with Abraham, which contains only the giving of the land, as is recounted in Gen 15:18-21:

That day YHWH made a covenant with Abram in these terms: «To your descendants I give this land, from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River,...»

Another difference is that in the psalm, the covenant is considered not only a promise but also a law («his word of command» and «a statute for Jacob»). This has no parallel in the Genesis narratives mentioned above.

The invitation to remember the divine promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob calls to mind the recollection of the covenants established with these Patriarchs, in Lev 26, the summary of the Holiness Code. Here, too, only the land is mentioned:

I shall remember my Covenant with Jacob, and my Covenant with Isaac, and my Covenant with Abraham; and I shall remember the land.
(Lev 26:42)

c) *The People Wandering in Canaan (vv. 12-15)*

After the introduction, the psalm begins the historical synopsis with the patriarchal period in Canaan, when the people were still nomads in that land. Even though they were few —or precisely because of that— they enjoyed the constant protection of YHWH. «He allowed no one to oppress them» could be a reference to the relationship of Abraham to the Canaanites and that of Jacob to Laban, while «he rebuked kings on their account» could be a summary of the Pharaoh (Gen 12) and Abimelech (Gen 20) episodes.

d) *Joseph's Story (vv. 16-23)*

The story of Joseph —from his sale as a slave to his rise to the highest office in the pharaoh's court (cf. vv. 16-22)— serves as a preparation for Israel's stay in Egypt. Some scholars underline the simi-

larity of this strophe to the account given in Genesis. Thus, R.J. Clifford writes:

Vv. 16-22, Joseph in Egypt, functions in the psalm as it does in the book of Genesis, as a preparation for Israel in Egypt...one finds three actors, God, the king/Egyptians, and Joseph gifted with the divine word of promise (v. 19). These are the same three actors one finds in the story of Israel in Egypt in vv. 23-28 except that of course Moses and Aaron replace Joseph⁸².

Other scholars, on the other hand, believe that the form in which the Joseph story is presented in the psalm indicates independence of the Genesis account⁸³.

We believe that complete independence of the Genesis narrative cannot be convincingly sustained. The close similarity in the chronology of events cannot be denied. Verses 17-21 follow the sequence of events narrated in the book of Genesis (cf. 37:28; 39:20; 40; 41:9-13; 41:14; 41:39-44). However, it seems that in the psalm, the famine comes at the beginning of the account (v. 16); whereas in Genesis, it comes after Joseph had become the highest official in Egypt (Gen 41:54). We think that this is not the case because vv. 17-22⁸⁴ should be considered as a recalling of events that took place *before* the famine referred to in v. 16, and presented here as some sort of «flashback».

Once again, a person chosen to carry out the plans of YHWH is presented: «he sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, sold as a slave» (v. 17). The word *'ebed* is used with reference to Joseph, just as in v. 6, to Abraham. Although the term as it is used here means «slave (to human masters)»; nevertheless, it points to the figure of the servant of YHWH, since it is used as an ironic device. A.R. Ceresko affirms:

[An] example of irony rests on the double meaning of *'ebed* in the psalm: «servant (of the Lord)»...and «slave (to human masters)».... As the story unfolds, the author shares his privileged knowledge with the reader: it was in being «sold as a slave» (*lě'ebed nimkar*) to a human master that Joseph would prove to be an *'ebed* «servant» of God as were Abraham (v. 6.42) and Moses (v. 26)⁸⁵.

e) *The Plagues Story (vv. 24-38)*

After a strophic summary of the oppression suffered by the people at the hands of the Egyptians (vv. 24-25), the psalm recounts the

story of the plagues. This tradition has been the object of many scholarly studies.

Most of these studies include a comparison of the Ps 105 plague account with those of Ex 7:8ff and Ps 78:43-52. Following the same method, we note that the Ps 105 version is closer to that of Exodus than that of Ps 78. The following table makes this clearer:

Plague	Sequence Position		
	Ex	s 105	Ps 78
the water of the Nile turned to blood [the waters turned to blood] [the rivers turned to blood]	1	2 1	
frogs	2	3	3
gnats	3	4b	—
swarms of flies	4	4a	2
severe plague upon cattle... and flocks	5	—	—
boils	6	—	—
thunder, hail, and fire [hail and lightning] [hail, frost, and lightning]	7	5	5
locusts [caterpillars and locusts]	8	6	4
darkness	9	1	—
death of Egyptian first-born	10	7	6

As we have already seen above, Ps 78 is four plagues short compared to Ex 7-12. It does not include the gnats, the cattle plague⁸⁶, the boils, and darkness. Ps 105, on the other hand, is three plagues short. It makes no mention of the cattle plague and the boils, and it presents the flies and gnats as one plague⁸⁷.

The sequence of plagues in Ps 105 is more similar to that of Ex 7-12 than that of Ps 78. Besides, the absence of two plagues and the consideration of the flies and the gnats as one plague, the only other difference is the transposition of the darkness plague. A number of scholars have attempted an explanation for this «rearrangement».

R.J. Clifford suggests that the reason is to emphasize the contrast between Egypt and the desert. The falling of darkness over the land of Egypt is in sharp contrast with the first divine act for Israel in the desert, which is the «lighting of the night» (v. 39)⁸⁸. Similarly, other authors believe that the motive is to contrast the authority of the Egyptian sun-god Re. A.F. Kirkpatrick affirms that the darkness plague was used chiefly to attack this sun-god worship⁸⁹. In a more recent work, D.A. Fox, confirms this opinion and considers the plague of darkness as the most important of the series:

It is by suppressing the power of Re (the Sun) as no rival Egyptian deity had ever been able to do that Yahweh most strikingly demonstrates His authority⁹⁰.

More recently, A.C.C. Lee offers an attractive, if not entirely convincing, theory. He explains the transposition of the darkness plague and also the omission of the cattle plague and the boils by comparing Ps 105's plague account with the overall literary design of the creation account in Gen 1. He suggests that there is an antithetical parallelism, as he shows in the following table⁹¹:

Day	Gen. i	Ps. cv
1 + 4 Heaven	Light + luminaries (Sun, Moon, Stars)	Darkness (v. 28a) + It became dark (v. 28b)
2 + 5 Waters	Water separated + Life populates water	Waters turned to blood (v. 29a) + Fish in water died (v. 29b)
3 + 6 Earth	(a) Dry land made + Living creatures b) Vegetation multiplies + Man was created	(a) Land swarmed with frogs, flies and gnats (vv. 30-31) (b) Vegetation destroyed (vv. 32-35) + Egyptian firstborn died (v. 36)

He goes on to point out the similarities in literary structure of the two accounts and «the same movement from heaven, to waters, to earth»⁹².

All the above theories have as premise Ps 105's dependence on the Pentateuchal traditions. The present author is inclined to think that this psalm reflects a tradition anterior to the Pentateuch. This could have been one of different traditions (each of which included less than ten plagues⁹³) which were collected, resulting in the ten plagues

of Ex 8-12 in its final form. It might be rightly argued that Ps 105 is posterior to the Pentateuch. This does not, however, invalidate the possibility that the psalm uses tradition which precedes the Pentateuch. If Ps 105 were indeed redacted after the Pentateuch, then it would just go to show that «the established authority of the Pentateuch did not stop the development of the plagues tradition»⁹⁴.

f) *Israel in the Desert (vv. 39-41)*

After relating the exit of Israel from Egypt (vv. 37-38), the psalmist deals briefly with the divine interventions during the desert wandering. Compared to the emphasis given to the other traditions (i.e., the Patriarchs, the Joseph story, and the plagues story), the reference to the desert period is very short⁹⁵. It includes the pillars of cloud and of fire (v. 39), the feeding with quails and manna (v. 40), and the water from the rock (v. 41). Ps 105 follows the same sequence of events that appears in Ex 13-17, an order that is not shared by Ps 78, as can be seen in the following table:

Event/Sign	Ex	Ps 105	Ps 78
Cloud and fire	13:21-22	v. 39	v. 14
Feeding with quails and manna	16:2-36	v. 40	v. 24
Water from the rock	17:1-7	v. 41	v. 15

It should be noted that the treatment of the cloud and the fire in this psalm is quite different from that in Ex 13⁹⁶ and Ps 78. In those accounts, the cloud and the fire serve as a theophanic guide, not as protective covering nor as light for the night. Some scholars see in Ps 105's presentation of the fire a device for emphasizing the contrast between YHWH's action in the land of Egypt and that in the desert. As we have already seen above, R.J. Clifford thinks that it serves as a contrast with the plague of darkness⁹⁷. A.R. Ceresko, on the other hand, points out that the fire «which lights the night for Israel in v. 39 contrasts with the destructive *ʾēš* "lightning" of the fifth plague in v. 32»⁹⁸.

There are, in fact, other elements in this desert account which serve as contrasts to the events narrated in the previous parts. YHWH provides the people quails and manna in the desert, while

He sends famine to the land (v. 16) and causes the destruction of the Egyptian crops (vv. 32-33). Furthermore, the water from the rock means life for the people, while the waters in Egypt turn to blood and bring death (to the fish).

It is quite surprising that no mention is made of the Sinai covenant. Should this have been an intentional silence, it would have been in order to give greater emphasis to the patriarchal promise of the land.

g) *The Possession of the Land* (vv. 42-45)

The psalm closes by reverting to the beginning (cf. vv. 8-11), making reference once again to the divine promise of land made to Abraham. The fundamental idea of YHWH's fidelity to the covenant is also emphasized:

For he remembered his holy promise
to Abraham, his servant.
So he led forth his people with joy,
his chosen ones with singing.
And he gave them the lands of the Gentiles;
and they took possession of the fruit of the people's toil,...
(Ps 105:42-44)

This closing strophe also implies that the exodus from Egypt and the subsequent desert period were the result of YHWH's promise of the land⁹⁹.

2. Analysis of Psalm 106

Psalm 106, like Ps 105, has as its basis the *Heilsgeschichte*, prompting, thus, its classification as a historical psalm. Some scholars, however, believe that it is better classified as a national confession of sins¹⁰⁰. S. Mowinckel's description of Ps 106 as an «historical penitential psalm»¹⁰¹ reflects both of these views.

C.A. Briggs and E. G. Briggs hold the radical opinion that this psalm was originally united with Ps 105 in a single composition, but was later divided for liturgical reasons. Thus, Ps 105 was put in a Hallel form, while Ps 106 was given a penitential character¹⁰². This

theory seems attractive especially if we consider that (i) both have the *Heilsgeschichte* as their basis, and (ii) their fundamental tendencies —although radically different (the righteousness and fidelity of YHWH on one hand, and the sins of the people on the other)— belong together from the theological point of view.

A. Weiser, on the other hand, does not accept this possibility. He believes that the difference in points of view is too great to allow for an originally single composition. He explains the different outlooks of Ps 105 and 106 in the light of the Covenant renewal liturgy according to Qumran's *Manual of Discipline*, which includes the following elements:

1. The praise of God in a hymn sung by the priests and Levites and the congregation's response, «Amen. Amen».
2. The recital by the priests of the divine saving deeds (*sid'qot 'el*).
3. The recital by the Levites of the «sins of the Israelites».
4. The confession of sins of those who «enter into the Covenant», made in recognition of God's righteousness and mercy.

Weiser compares Ps 105 with the priests' recital of YHWH's saving deeds, and considers Ps 106 as the prototype of the Levites' recital of the sins of the Israelites. Thus, he believes that both psalms could have been constituent parts of the same liturgy.

This theory is in strong contrast to Mowinckel's listing of Ps 106 as one of the non-cultic poems. According to him, these poems belong to the «latest psalmography», which dates from that period in which «people no longer composed for a definite cultic occasion»¹⁰³. He does not, however, deny the possibility of the poet's adhering to the old rules of composition.

Although it is almost universally held that vv. 46-47 of the psalm presuppose the Babylonian exile; nevertheless, its composition date still remains to be determined with certainty.

For purposes of analysis, the psalm can be divided into three main parts, namely, (i) Israel's exodus from Egypt (vv. 7-12), (ii) the people's sinful ways in the desert (vv. 13-33), and their infidelities during the settlement of the land of Canaan (vv. 34-46). These verses are preceded by a short introduction, which consists of a call to testify to YHWH's goodness and to remember His saving deeds (vv. 1-5), and of a confession of guilt for sins both past and present (v.

6). The psalm ends with an appeal to YHWH for salvation from the enemies (v. 47) and a doxology (v. 48).

a) *A Call to Testify and a Confession of Guilt (vv. 1-6)*

Like the psalm that precedes it, Ps 106 begins with an invitation to testify to the saving deeds of YHWH. Then it immediately enters into a petition for blessing (v. 3) and a supplication for salvation (vv. 4-5). Verse 4 («Remember us, O Lord, by showing favor to thy people; / visit us with thy salvation.») sets the tone for the remembrance of the *Heilsgeschichte* in the verses that follow.

The use of the events of the saving history of Israel serves as a support for the confession of guilt in v. 6: «Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity and have done wickedly.» In fact, most of the psalm consists in recalling the sinful ways of the people during the exodus, the desert period, and the settlement. However, hand in hand with the review of the people's sins, the emphasis upon God's mercy is also present throughout the psalm (cf. vv. 8ff, 23, and 43ff).

b) *The Exodus from Egypt (vv. 7-12)*

The psalmist places the people's sins as far back as their sojourn in Egypt. Their transgressions consist mainly of forgetting YHWH's marvels and rebelling against Him:

Our fathers, when they were in Egypt,
did not consider thy wonderful works;
they did not remember the abundance of thy grace,
but rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea.

(Ps 106:7)

Israel's forgetting of YHWH's interventions on their behalf is a theme that is repeated throughout this psalm (cf. vv. 13, 21-22), being in this respect similar to Ps 78 (cf. vv. 11, 42-43).

Another theme that crops up often in Ps 106 is Israel's rebellion, the first mention of which is the episode at the Red Sea. This could be a reference to the Israelites' reaction when they saw the Egyptian army coming to their pursuit, as narrated in Ex 14:10-12. In the

Exodus narration, however, the people do not rebel directly against YHWH, but speak against Moses.

The psalmist then takes up the crossing of the Red Sea episode (vv. 8-12), presenting the important elements included in the Ex 14-15 narrative, namely, the crossing of the Israelites (14:15-22), the drowning of the Egyptian army (14:23-28), and the song of victory (15:1-21). He emphasizes that this singular event came as a result of YHWH's own initiative:

For the sake of his name, he saved them
to demonstrate his power.

(Ps 106:8)

This is the same reason that Ezekiel gives for the divine interventions in the desert (cf. Ez 20: 9, 14, 22).

As we have seen above, the crossing of the sea is mentioned briefly in Ps 78 (v. 13). There is a slight difference, however: whereas, on the one hand, Ps 78 states that the waters were divided (the root *bq'*); Ps 106, on the other hand, says that the sea was dried up (the root *hrb*). The Exodus account includes the two versions:

...YHWH drove back the sea with a strong easterly wind all night, and he made dry land of the sea.¹⁰⁴ And the waters parted¹⁰⁵ and the sons of Israel went on dry ground right into the sea, walls of water to right and left of them.

(Ex 14:21-22)

Just as in Isaiah (41:14), YHWH is presented in this psalm as Israel's redeemer. Although the noun *go'el* is not used, the verb *g'l* is used to express YHWH's saving action: «and he rescued them (*wayyig' 'ālēm*) from the clutches of the enemy». As we have already pointed out earlier, the idea of YHWH's being the redeemer of Israel is closely linked to the exodus from Egypt.

c) *The People in the Desert (vv. 13-33)*

The psalmist then goes on to describe Israel's sinful ways in the desert and YHWH's reaction, using the following general pattern: (i) the people forget the previous saving interventions of YHWH; (ii) they murmur, rebel, or sin against Him; (iii) YHWH reacts; (iv) someone intercedes for the people; and (v) His anger is stayed.

Verses 13-33 make reference to events most of which are narrated in the Book of Numbers. The first of these is the people's demand for meat (v. 14: «their desires overcame them in the wilds»; cf. Num 11:4-6). Ps 78 also mentions this event and is even more explicit (cf. Ps 78:18). YHWH's response is to grant them what they asked for (cf. v. 15a; Num 11:16-32)¹⁰⁶ and then inflict them with a fever (cf. v. 15b; a plague in Num 11:33).

This is immediately followed by the description of Dathan and Abiram's rebellion, caused by their envy of Moses and Aaron (cf. vv. 16-18; Num 16). The psalmist makes no mention of Korah, perhaps out of respect for the Korahite temple-singers¹⁰⁷. He summarizes the punishments that befall the rebels in two verses (17 and 18), which are the same as those narrated in Num 16:25-35.

Then comes the golden calf incident (cf. vv. 19-23), an episode found not in the book of Numbers, but in Exodus (chap. 32). The name «Horeb» is used to designate Sinai. This is common in the book of Deuteronomy. The psalm also makes reference to the extreme ire of YHWH, which is stayed by Moses' intervention (cf. v. 23; Ex 32:11ff).

The series of rebellions continues with the people's refusal to enter the promised land (cf. vv. 24-25; Num 14:1-9). Verse 25 echoes Dt 1:27 («you murmured in your tents»). YHWH reacts by making a vow against the people («He raised his hand against them»): their exile from the promised land, their dispersal to different nations (cf. vv. 26-27). This vow is narrated in Num 14:29-30, and is referred to in Ez 20: 15, 23.

The psalmist then makes reference to the apostasy to Baal-Peor (cf. vv. 28-31; Num 25:1-13), pointing out the important elements of this incident: (i) the eating of the Semitic sacrificial food, (ii) the ire of YHWH, (iii) the intervention of Phineas, and (iv) the staying of the divine wrath. We note that the psalm's presentation of this incident is similar to that of the Numbers account, save one important element: there is no reference to Phineas' lancing of the transgressors (cf. Num 25:6-8). This could be considered an «aggadic transformation» of the Pentateuchal *traditum*. The psalmist transformed the violent act into a peaceful one, without leaving out what was essential, that is, that it was an act of intervention¹⁰⁸.

The part of the psalm which deals with the desert period of Israel closes with the Meribah incident (cf. vv. 32-33; Num 20:2-13; Ex 17:1-7).

The psalmist states that because of this event, «things went wrong for Moses». This could be a reference to his not being allowed to enter the promised land as a result of the people's putting YHWH to the test, as Num 20:12 affirms. The same motive is given in Dt 32:51. In the same book, however, the incident at Meribah is also given as the origin of the Levitical priesthood (cf. Dt 33:8-11)¹⁰⁹.

d) *Infidelities in the Promised Land (vv. 34-46)*

Verses 34-46 describe the continuous sinning of the people during the process of settlement of the land. The series of infidelities has as its root cause the disobedience to the divine command to destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan (cf. v. 34). This could be a reference to the command given in Ex 34:11-16 and its parallel in Dt 7:1-5 (which is repeated in Dt 20:10-18). The people's disobedience leads to their intermarrying with the pagans and adopting their practices, thus breaking YHWH's rules for conjugal relationships, which appear in Lev 18. It also leads to idolatry, including human sacrifice offered to the demons (*šdyṃ*) of Canaan, a practice which is perhaps the object of the prohibition found in Lev 18:21¹¹⁰. The people, in their sinful ways, are likened to a harlot, a typical figure for idolatry found in the Prophets.

Verses 41 and 42 describe YHWH's punishment for such behavior. The wars and defeats of Israel at the early stage of the settlement of Canaan are interpreted as divine punishment¹¹¹. This is followed by a summary of the contrasting attitudes of YHWH and His people, that of fidelity and mercy on the one hand, and of sinfulness on the other¹¹². The reason given for this divine behavior is the remembrance of the Covenant: «For their sake, he remembered his covenant, he relented in his great love.» Most probably, the psalmist refers to the divine promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. Ps 105:8-11; Lev 26:42), given that no mention is made of the Sinai Covenant anywhere in this psalm nor in the preceding one. The psalmist seems to extend this attitude of mercy up to the time of the exile, as v. 46 would suggest.

e) *Concluding Prayer and Doxology (vv. 47-48)*

The closing strophes lead back to the beginning of the psalm (vv. 4-5). The concluding prayer reflects the hope that «in response to its

confession of guilt God will not deny his help, but will bring together the members of the Covenant scattered amongst the nations, so that thanksgiving for his help and praise of his holy lovingkindness in the mouth of the congregation may resound in his ears»¹¹³.

3. Recapitulation of the Analysis

Whether or not Pss 105 and 106 were originally united in one composition, what is clear is that they are closely related. It cannot be denied that there is a certain continuity between the two, notwithstanding some overlap. Ps 105 is concerned with the period from Abraham to the desert wandering, but also goes beyond that to the early stage of the settlement of the land. Ps 106 covers from the exodus out of Egypt to the period of the Judges, but also seems to refer to the time of the exile.

The relationship between the two psalms goes beyond mere continuity. Their fundamental themes, although radically different, are theologically related. The fidelity and mercy of God (emphasized in Ps 105) on the one hand, and the disobedience and ingratitude of the people (stressed in Ps 106) on the other, are two outlooks that belong together in the OT. Without going too far, we have the example of Ps 78.

Furthermore, in both psalms, Moses is given a prominent position. In Ps 105, he is called the servant of YHWH (cf. v. 26), and is presented as the one who carried out the divine miracles in Egypt (cf. v. 27). Similarly, in Ps 106, he is referred to as the chosen one of YHWH (cf. v. 23), and his role as intercessor is emphasized. However, it is surprising that in neither of these psalms is there an explicit mention of the Covenant in Sinai. On the contrary, prominence is given to the divine promise of land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Some scholars view this emphasis on the land as a technique for showing the contrast between Egypt and the desert¹¹⁴. We believe, however, that, above all, the invitation to recall such a promise suggests that these psalms were composed at a time when Israel did not in fact possess the land¹¹⁵, most probably during the exile or towards the end of it. Thus, it would have served as a call to hope for the future repatriation. We do not deny, however, that the psalmist(s) could have used traditions which were then already old.

The different accounts contained in Pss 105 and 106 show striking similarities with those in the Pentateuch. The patriarchal accounts and the Joseph story in Ps 105 are in keeping with the Genesis narratives. The psalm's account of the plagues is closer to that of the Book of Exodus than that of Ps 78. The desert account of Ps 105 includes events narrated in Exodus, while that of Ps 106 refers to the people's rebellious acts described mostly in the Book of Numbers. Some authors take these similarities as argument for the psalms' *dependence* upon Pentateuchal traditions¹¹⁶. We think, however, that the similarities do not necessarily mean dependence, but could rather imply that the Pentateuch and the psalms in question contain *old traditions common to both of them*.

Psalms 105 and 106 reflect a knowledge of traditions concerning a time of Israel in the desert. They show striking similarities with the Pentateuchal tradition (i.e., that found in Exodus and Numbers), but also a few differences. Psalm 105 describes only YHWH's saving interventions on behalf of His people in the desert¹¹⁷, and does not mention any disobedient or rebellious act of the people. It presents the positive sense of the desert, emphasizing YHWH's loving providence during the people's desert period.

Conversely, Ps 106 paints a gloomy picture of the desert sojourn. After a brief account of the Red Sea crossing, there is no mention of any other saving deed of YHWH in the desert. What follows, instead, is the narration of a series of rebellions and consequent divine punishments. The negative sense is further emphasized by the fact that there is no mention whatsoever of repentance by the people. There is, on the contrary, repeated reference to the mercy of YHWH. We believe that this emphasis is in keeping with the aim of the psalm, that is, the hope of gaining divine mercy as a response to the confession of guilt.

D. PSALMS 135 AND 136

Two other psalms which deal with a time of Israel in the desert, although in an almost fleeting manner, are Pss 135 and 136. Both are hymns of praise which recall the Creation by YHWH and His saving deeds in history. The former does not mention the desert at

all, while the latter refers to it very briefly (v. 16). Both, however, recall the same incidents which occurred during this time, that is, Israel's victory over many kings (Ps 135:10-11; 136:17-20). Because of these similarities, we shall analyze both psalms in one section.

1. Analysis of Psalm 135

Ps 135 is a liturgical hymn composed for recitation by the covenant community¹¹⁸. It has the following essential features: (i) the revelation of YHWH's Name; (ii) YHWH's majesty as manifested in Creation, in the election of Israel, in His saving interventions in history, in His goodness, and in His judgment; and (iii) the renunciation of the pagan gods and their worshippers¹¹⁹.

The psalm abounds in verses that are strikingly similar to those of other psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Deuteronomy¹²⁰. These similarities, together with the mention of those «that fear God» (v. 20) — who are taken as proselytes of late Judaism—, and the seemingly priestly character of the hymn (vv. 19-20), have led to the opinion of a post-exilic composition date for Ps 135¹²¹. A. Weiser, however, thinks that these arguments are not convincing enough and refutes them as follows:

(i) Ps 135's parallels with other texts of the OT could be explained by «the psalmist's deliberate adherence to the fixed and stylized forms of the tradition which had their place in the cultus»¹²²;

(ii) the phrase «you that fear God» could be interpreted as «a summary description of the various groups of the Israelite cult community who have previously been addressed in the psalm»¹²³; and

(iii) «the tradition of the Aaronite priesthood dates from an earlier period than that of the priestly writings of the Pentateuch»¹²⁴.

We cannot deny the existence of features which seem to point to a post-exilic composition of the psalm, nor can we exclude the possibility of its pre-exilic origin. The presence of traditions allegedly fashioned by the Deuteronomist and the Priestly circles is comfortably explained as borrowings from literary sources. There is, however, an equally strong possibility that this presence could be the result of the use of common traditions as basis.

In analyzing the psalm, we shall use the following outline:

a. Invitation to Praise YHWH	vv.	1-4
b. YHWH as Creator		5-7
c. YHWH's Intervention in History		8-12
d. Hymnic Prayer to YHWH and Renunciation of Pagan Gods		13-18
e. Renewed Call to Praise YHWH		19-21

a) *Invitation to Praise YHWH (vv. 1-4)*

The call to praise YHWH is directed to both the cult officials who are inside the sanctuary («you that stand in the house of YHWH») and to the people assembled in the temple court («in the courts of the house of our God»). There is also an invitation to praise the Name of YHWH, which is, in the final analysis, a repetition of the opening call since «this name...is the compressed manifestation of the divine nature and will»¹²⁵. The psalmist gives the motives, using the characteristic initial word *kî*: (i) «for YHWH is good»; (ii) «for it [YHWH's Name] is pleasant»; and (iii) «for YH has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel as His possession». The reasons for praise are presented in a crescendo, leading up to the principal one, which is the election of Israel as the people of YHWH. In mentioning the election, the psalmist uses both «Jacob» and «Israel» to refer to the people. Israel is presented as YHWH's possession, very much in keeping with the election passages Ex 19:5 and Dt 7:6, and, thus, with the Deuteronomist idea of divine selection.

b) *YHWH as Creator (vv. 5-7)*

The psalmist then goes on to present the wondrous deeds of YHWH, beginning with a brief summary of Creation. This section begins with still another motive for praising YHWH: «for I know that YHWH is great, and our Lord is above all gods» (v. 5). This praising of YHWH's greatness is similar to Ex 18:11, the words of Jethro to Moses in recognition of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt as a divine act¹²⁶. Verse 5 is strikingly similar to Ps 95:3, as we have seen above: «for YHWH is a great God, and a great king above all gods».

This greatness is manifested in Creation and in the divine dominion over nature. The psalmist summarizes the Creation account by

mentioning the three main elements of the universe, namely, heaven, earth, and the seas (v. 6). He emphasizes the unlimited divine power by stating that «whatever YHWH pleased He did». This phrase (also used in Ps 115:3) is not a mere literary cliché but, rather, the adoption of a legal formula, granting unlimited powers to a person, which dates back to the fifth century B.C.¹²⁷. Most probably, by the time this formula was used in the psalm, it had already lost its legal nature.

YHWH's dominion over nature is described succinctly in v. 7, in a manner which is almost literally parallel to Jer 10:13. The reference to clouds, lightning, rain, and wind seems to suggest fertility. As A. Weiser writes, the allusion to these elements «ensues from the connection with the autumn festival which has in view the end of the harvest and the beginning of the rainy season and therewith the fertility of the New Year»¹²⁸.

c) *YHWH's Intervention in History (vv. 8-12)*

After the recapitulation of the Creation tradition, the psalm continues with a series of divine interventions in Israel's history — namely, the plagues in Egypt, the victory over the kings, and the conquest of the land— in which YHWH is manifested as Saviour. Thus, the two pivots of the OT teaching on God, Creation and Redemption, are present in this psalm, just as in Ps 95.

The psalmist mentions only the most significant and the climax of the plagues visited upon Egypt, that is, the death of the Egyptian first-born. As we have seen above, this plague is included in the accounts of Exodus (12:29), Ps 78 (v. 51), and Ps 105 (v. 36), in which it occupies the last place. The psalmist specifies that the plague was upon the first-born «of man and beast alike», in accord with the Exodus account. Pss 78 and 105 do not make this specification. What follows is the recalling of the other plagues, summarized as «signs and wonders» of YHWH in Egypt.

There is no mention whatsoever of the events during the desert period. The victory over the kings referred to should be considered part of the conquest and settlement of the land. The psalmist first makes a general statement referring to the victories of Moses and Josue over the Canaanite kings, as narrated in Numbers, Deutero-

nomys, and Josue. He mentions the slaughter of «Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan» (cf. Num 21:21ff; Dt 2:30ff; 3:1ff; Jos 12:1ff), and makes a summary which echoes the opening general statement: «and all the kingdoms of Canaan». It is interesting to note that the conquest of these kingdoms is attributed solely to YHWH. Thus, in v. 12, the psalmist affirms that the land comes into the possession of the people not because of their effort but, rather, because it is given to them by YHWH.

d) *Hymnic Prayer to YHWH and Renunciation of the Pagan Gods (vv. 13-18)*

After the *Heilsgeschichte*, the psalm resumes its praising character through a hymnic prayer (vv. 13-14), which leads back to the beginning of the psalm, emphasizing the divine name and YHWH's goodness. Verse 13 is in accord with YHWH's words at the revelation of His Name to Moses, as they appear in Ex 3:15.

Ps 135:13 YHWH, Your Name is forever;
YHWH, Your memory
from generation to generation.

Ex 3:15 ...This is My Name forever,
and this is My memory
from generation to generation.

On the other hand, v. 14 is identical to Dt 32:36, which is part of a song predicting divine judgment upon the people for their transgression: «For YHWH judges His people, and comforts His servants»¹²⁹.

In order to highlight YHWH's greatness, the psalmist presents the contrasting powerlessness of the pagans' idols, in vv. 15-18, which is almost identical to Ps 115:4-6a, 8. He succinctly shows the foolishness of worshipping the product of one's own work. A. Weiser writes:

[The psalmist] has clearly grasped the cardinal truth that thereby the barriers between God and man obliterated. As man is, so are his gods; indeed, man is actually their master, since he manufactures the inanimate images of his gods, and yet he is at the same time also a fool because he worships the work of his own hands and puts his trust in

these images as if they possessed a «power» of their own. With this the essence of the utter perversion of all belief in gods is grasped and aptly characterized¹³⁰.

e) *Renewed Call to Praise YHWH (vv. 19-21)*

The psalm closes with a call to bless YHWH, thus, leading back to the beginning. The summons is directed to the temple officials («House of Levi»; the «servants» of vv. 1-2) and to the three classes of worshippers, namely, the covenant community («House of Israel»), the Aaronite priests («House of Aaron»), and the proselytes of non-Israelite origin (those «who fear YHWH»). The same worshippers are referred to in Pss 115 (vv. 9-11) and 118 (vv. 2-4).

2. Analysis of Psalm 136

Ps 136 can be classified as a litany hymn with a refrain («for His mercy [*hesed*] [endures] forever»)¹³¹. This antiphony also appears in Pss 106, 107, and 118. This psalm is strikingly similar to Ps 135. In fact, Ps 136:17-22 is almost identical to Ps 135:10-12. This similarity, along with the presence of Deuteronomist and Priestly traditions¹³², could point to borrowings from other literary sources, or to a dependence on common traditions preserved in an oral cultic tradition¹³³. S. Mowinckel considers the psalm as a hymn of praise of an enumerative style; that is, it simply «enumerates or points out God's lasting qualities and glorious deeds», thus, making it «suit any cultic occasions, both daily and festal»¹³⁴. The Jews call this psalm the «Great Hallel» in distinction from the «Lesser Hallel» or the «Hallel of Egypt» (Pss 113-118). It is called «great» most probably because of the twenty-six repetitions of the antiphony, which appears only six times in the Lesser Hallel.

We shall analyze the psalm based on the following outline:

a. Thanksgiving and Description of Creation	vv.	1-9
b. Exodus from Egypt and Desert Wandering		10-18
c. Conquest and Settlement of Canaan		19-22
d. Actual Intervention		23-26

a) *Thanksgiving and Description of Creation (vv. 1-9)*

The first three verses are repeated calls to give thanks (*hōdû*) to YHWH, Who is also called «God of gods» and «Lord of lords». These expressions can be found in Dt 10:17 («For the Lord your God, He is God of gods and Lord of lords...»). The motives for thanksgiving are YHWH's goodness (v. 1a; cf. Ps 135:3) and His everlasting love (the antiphony).

A description of Creation follows the opening stanza, divided into two stanzas of three verses each. The first stanza opens with a statement of YHWH's uniqueness: He alone is capable of performing great marvels. Then, the psalmist specifies what these great wonders are, namely, the creation of heaven and of «the earth upon the waters». The mention of these three elements —heaven, earth, and waters— suggest the creation of the universe in its totality.

The second stanza of the Creation account deals with the creation of the heavenly bodies. The psalm's description is strikingly similar to that of Gen 1:16, as can be observed below:

Gen 1:16	Ps 136:7-9
And God made the two great lights, the greater to rule the day and the lesser to rule the night, and the stars.	To Him Who made great lights, ... The sun to rule at day, ... The moon and stars to rule the night ...

Two differences come to the fore: (i) in the Genesis account, the greater light and the lesser light are sole rulers of the day and the night, respectively (i.e., the greater light rules *the* day, excluding any other ruler, and the lesser light, *the* night)¹³⁵; and (ii) in Gen 1:16, only the lesser light rules the night, while in the psalm account, both the moon and stars do¹³⁶.

b) *Exodus from Egypt and Desert Wandering (vv. 10-18)*

The next three verses (10-12) describe Israel's exit from Egypt. Verse 10 is a reference to the death of the Egyptian first-born. As in

Ps 135, here, it is the only plague mentioned. In keeping with the other plague accounts (i.e., Ex 7-12; Ps 78:44-51; Ps 105:28-36), Ps 136 mentions the climax of the plagues, which leads to Israel's finally leaving Egypt, described in v. 11. Both actions —the killing of the first-born and the bringing out of the people— have YHWH as subject. Verse 12 is a description of how he carried them out; that is, He smote the Egyptian first-born «with a strong hand» (v. 12aa) and He brought out Israel with «an outstretched arm» (v. 12ab; i.e., openly and publicly)¹³⁷. These expressions could point to Deuteronomist influence, given that both are found in Dt 4:34.

The psalmist then refers to the Red Sea incident (vv. 13-15). It is the only event of the exodus mentioned in the psalm, suggesting that the psalmist considers it as the supreme example of divine deliverance, just as he considers the death of the Egyptian first-born as the most important of the plagues. The description of the sea crossing contains the three elements we have already noted in the other accounts, namely, (i) the parting of the waters, (ii) the safe crossing of the Israelites, and (iii) the drowning of the Egyptian army.

After this, a very brief reference is made to the desert wandering, beginning with a general statement of YHWH's leading the people in the desert (v. 16). The psalmist does not mention any specific event but, rather, summarizes YHWH's victory over «great kings» and «mighty kings», in the two verses that follow. This could be taken as an allusion to either the kings who made war on Israel while they were still wandering in the desert, or the Canaanite kings whom Moses and Josue defeated before the settlement of the land.

c) *Conquest and Settlement of Canaan (vv. 19-22)*

Verses 19 and 20 continue the account of the war with kings begun in vv. 17 and 18. Here, however, specific kings are mentioned: Sihon of the Amorites and Og of Bashan, the same rulers mentioned in Ps 135. Then, the psalmist goes on to describe the ensuing settlement of the land by Israel. Emphasis is given to YHWH's granting (*ntn*) of the land to the people, who are mere passive receivers (vv. 21-22). The psalmist refers to Israel collectively as «His servant» perhaps in order to emphasize the special mission that the Chosen People have in the divine plan.

d) *Actual Intervention* (vv. 23-26)

Verses 23 and 24 seem to refer to a present intervention of YHWH on behalf of His people, an event that could have given rise to the composition of this psalm¹³⁸. It seems that the people had been subjected to oppression by the enemies, and YHWH delivered them when they were most desperate. YHWH's remembering (*zkr*) of His people is in sharp contrast to their common attitude of forgetting His laws, as is emphasized in Pss 78 and 106. Verse 24 highlights the figure of YHWH as Saviour, serving, thus, to echo His saving interventions described in vv. 10-22, and to counterbalance the figure of YHWH as Creator in vv. 4-9. Once again, we see the two pillars of OT thought about God —Creation and Redemption— intertwined in this psalm.

Ps 136 concludes with another praise to God. This time, however, the praise is directed to a more *universal* God, whose providence extends over all creatures: «to Him who gives (*ntn*) food to all flesh» (v. 25). This verse counters the other *ntn*-verse (v. 21), which describes YHWH's action in favor of only the Chosen People. The psalm closes with a thanksgiving to the «God of heaven». This title suggests the late exilic or post-exilic period, given that it is used also in Ez 1:2 and Neh 1:4; 2:4.

3. Recapitulation of the Analysis

Psalms 135 and 136 are psalms of praise to YHWH for His goodness and greatness. The psalmist shows that YHWH is truly «God of gods» and «Lord of lords», and that «His mercy endures forever» by recalling His works in Creation and His saving deeds in Israel's history.

In these psalms, YHWH is presented as both Creator and Saviour. On the one hand, the idea of the creation of the universe in its totality by YHWH is put across through the mention of heaven, earth, and water (cf. Ps 135:6 and 136:5-6). On the other hand, the two psalms make manifest the figure of YHWH as Saviour by referring to the plague of the Egyptian first-born, to the victory over kings (specifying among them, Sihon of the Amorites and Og of Bashan), and to the giving of the land. Psalm 136 also mentions the

crossing of the Red Sea and YHWH's leading His people through the desert.

Psalms 136 makes a passing reference to a time of Israel in the desert. The only explicit statement concerning this period is found in v. 16: «to Him Who led His people through the desert,...». The two other references are concerned with specific events which could have occurred during the desert wandering—as could be gathered from the Pentateuchal accounts and the references in the prophetic books and the psalms already studied above—, namely, the Red Sea incident (cf. vv. 13-15) and the slaying of kings (cf. vv. 17-19). Ps 135 also mentions the victory over kings (cf. vv. 10-11). However, whereas, on the one hand, Ps 136 could possibly make an allusion to the rulers who fought with Israel while they were still in the desert, Ps 135, on the other hand, specifies that they were Canaanite kings: «...and all the kingdoms of Canaan»(v. 11c). Thus, Ps 135's mention of the slaughter of kings cannot be considered as an allusion to the desert period but, rather to the time of the settlement of the land.

Why does Ps 135, a psalm very similar to Ps 136, not include any reference to Israel's time in the desert? Most probably the psalmist did not consider it as important as the other traditions, namely, Creation, the plagues of Egypt and the exodus, and the conquest and settlement of the land. Taking into account the possibly late redaction date of these psalms, it would be logical to think that the desert tradition was already losing the importance it enjoyed in the earlier prophetic books and psalms.

CONCLUSION

In the books we have studied *midbār* is used to refer mainly to two concepts, namely, (i) the ruin and desolation of a land as a consequence of divine punishment, and (ii) an unpopulated geographical area through which Israel made a long journey.

1. The Major Prophets employ the imagery of the desert locality to present the desolation of a place as a result of YHWH's punishment, which is called for by the inhabitants' transgressions. In most of the cases, the object of the divine ire is either Israel, Judah, or Jerusalem, and the motive is the People's turning their backs on YHWH. In a few ca-

ses, the divine punishment is also directed to some pagan nations due to the harm they had inflicted on the People of Israel. YHWH carries out this action either directly —through the mysterious transformation of the land— or through the armies of the enemy nations.

2. The authors of the Books of Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and of the Psalms knew of a primitive tradition of Israel's time in the desert, making use of it according to the circumstances and needs of the times.

(a) Hosea uses the image of Israel's pitiful state in the desert in a threat of punishment against the People for their unfaithful ways (Hos 2:5). The authoritative character of this text, despite its implicit form, can be understood only if we consider that the prophet presupposed the People's knowledge of a primitive tradition concerning Israel's time in the desert. He also employs this desert tradition as an analogy for bringing the People to the desert in order to purify them of idolatrous influences (2:16). Furthermore, Hosea refers to it in order to contrast Israel's infidelity with YHWH's loving providence (9:10; 13:4-6).

Amos explicitly refers to Israel's sojourn in the desert, specifying that it lasted forty years (Am 2:10; 5:25), and places it at par with the exodus from Egypt and the possession of the land (2:10).

(b) The Book of Isaiah deals more directly with a sojourn in the desert during Israel's return from exile. It could be noted, however, that he repeatedly recalls an event that reminds us of a similar episode in the Exodus narratives, that is, Israel's march through the parted waters of the sea and the drowning of the pursuing army (Is 43:16-17; 63:11-13). Furthermore, the prophet presents the divine presence in the desert with the image of the manifestation of YHWH's glory (Is 35:2; 40:5). We have pointed out that this image is often used with the same meaning in the desert narrations of the Book of Exodus.

Jeremiah, on the other hand, refers mainly to the time Israel spent in the desert after the exodus from Egypt and before the settlement of the Promised Land (Jer 2:2, 6). He emphasizes the image of YHWH leading the People through the desert, contrasting the hardships of such a journey with the loving relationship between YHWH and Israel.

Ezekiel refers explicitly to Israel's sojourn in the desert after her exodus from Egypt by specifying the geographical location as the

«desert of the land of Egypt» (Ez 20:36). The prophet also emphasizes that YHWH gave His laws to His people in the desert (20:11). We have noted that this calls to mind the Pentateuchal idea that YHWH gave the bulk of His laws through Moses in the Sinai stage of the desert wandering.

(c) The psalms we have studied reflect a number of traditions also present in the Pentateuch, namely, (i) the people of Israel's settlement in Egypt at Joseph's invitation (Ps 105); (ii) YHWH's deliverance of His people from Egyptian oppression (Ps 78) through Moses and Aaron (Ps 105), after inflicting plagues upon their masters (Pss 78, 135, 136); (iii) the people's crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptian pursuers (Pss 78, 106, 136); (iv) YHWH's guidance in the desert despite the people's rebellions (Pss 78, 105, 106, 136)¹³⁹; and (v) the granting of the land of Canaan as a heritage (Pss 78, 105, 135, 136) as YHWH had promised to the ancestors (Ps 105).

We see, thus, that in the Psalms, Israel's time in the desert seems to be considered as one of the key events of her saving history (*Heilsgeschichte*). It serves as a backdrop to contrast YHWH's salvific interventions on behalf of His people with their rebellious acts.

3. We note a progressive development in the use of the desert tradition in the passages analyzed above. This is confirmed by the fact that words, figures, and ideas which appear in Hosea and Amos are used and developed in posterior prophetic texts (especially those of Jeremiah and Ezekiel). Whereas, these eighth-century prophets refer to the desert period in a general manner¹⁴⁰, the later prophets make allusions to concrete events that were supposed to have occurred during that time (e.g., the manifestation of YHWH's glory, the Red Sea crossing, and the giving of the Law). This is made even clearer in the psalms we have studied. They make references —explicit or implicit— to the theophanic cloud and fire (Pss 78, 105), the quails and manna (Pss 78, 105), the Massah-Meribah incident (Pss 78, 95, 105, 106), the crossing of the Red Sea (Pss 78, 106), the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram (Ps 106), the molten calf incident in Horeb (Ps 106), the Baal-Peor incident (Ps 106), and the slaying of kings in the desert (Ps 136). Thus, it could be held that from a primitive nucleus already existent in the prophets of the eighth century B.C. (concerning a trek of Israel through the desert before her settlement in the

land of Canaan, during which she experienced the closeness and the protection of her God), the posterior prophets and the Psalms developed the desert tradition further by «inserting» concrete events that happened during that period. These events could have been gathered from other «desert traditions» before the desert tradition as we know it in the Pentateuch was given its definitive form.

In concrete points of the analysis, we have pointed out various elements that seem to suggest relationships with the Deuteronomist and Priestly traditions. We have considered the possibility that Amos and Hosea —taking into account their widely accepted early redaction— could have been sources of the Deuteronomist desert tradition, or at least had a common source with it. We have also noted similarities of the desert tradition in Isaiah and Jeremiah with that of the Deuteronomist. Furthermore, we have suggested the possibility that Ezekiel could have been a source of the Priestly tradition. Thus, it could be affirmed that the Deuteronomist and Priestly elements and ideas concerning the desert tradition contained in the Pentateuch can be found in OT writings whose composition (or redaction) predates that of the Pentateuch.

4. The texts analyzed reflect both the positive and negative sense of the desert period. Generally, each passage emphasizes one or the other aspect; however, in some cases, both senses are present, usually in order to stress the contrast between the attitudes of YHWH and His people.

(a) Hosea presents both the positive and negative aspects of the desert tradition according to the needs of his preaching. He makes allusions to the positive sense when he deals with the necessity of purifying the People of their idolatrous practices in order to prepare them to return to the Land (Hos 2:16). On the other hand, he presents the negative aspect when he makes allusions to Israel's pathetic situation in the desert in order to warn the People (2:5). In a couple of cases, the prophet considers the desert period as a time characterized by the purity of the relationship between YHWH and Israel, but also admits that it was the time of her transgressions (9:10) and her forgetting of YHWH (13:4-6).

Amos, on the other hand, seems to consider only the positive aspect of Israel's sojourn in the desert. He presents it as one of the greatest benefits of YHWH for His people, and gives it as much impor-

tance as the deliverance from Egypt and the taking of the Promised Land (Am 2:10). Moreover, he conceives it as a time when Israel rendered Him true worship (5:25).

(b) Isaiah and Jeremiah seem to make manifest the positive sense of Israel's time in the desert, while Ezekiel presents its negative sense.

Isaiah pictures the desert sojourn as a time for YHWH's providential intervention on behalf of Israel, as implied by the repeated use of the sea-crossing episode and of the image of the appearance of the glory of YHWH in the desert. The prophet also presents a positive picture of Israel's desert period after the Exile. He portrays it as a time of intimate relationship between YHWH and Israel, as expressed through the figure of the shepherd caring for his lambs (Is 40:11). Furthermore, he emphasizes the ease of the trek with the image of the transformation of the desert (Is 35:1, 6, 9; 40:4; 41:18, 19; 43:19, 20).

Jeremiah also seems to consider the desert period after the flight from Egypt as a time of profound intimacy between YHWH and Israel. In fact, he presents it as her bridal period (Jer 2:2). Considering the opinions of various authors, we have pointed out that the prophet seems to portray it as a mutual relationship.

Ezekiel, on the contrary, paints a negative picture of Israel's post-exodus desert sojourn. He considers this period as a time of Israel's infidelities and, as a consequence, as a time for judgment and purification¹⁴¹ (cf. Ez 20:35-38). In fact, the prophet portrays Israel as a rebel and transgressor during her time in Egypt, in the desert, and in the Promised Land. This is in sharp contrast to the Jeremian idea that the People's transgression came only at the time of the settlement of the Land; before that time, Israel faithfully followed YHWH.

(c) Both the positive and negative senses are manifested in the so-called historical psalms. This is the case of Ps 78 and of the twin Psalms 105 (which mentions only the wondrous deeds of YHWH) and 106 (which includes only the people's transgressions). However, the negative sense of the desert period seems to prevail. Ps 95 presents the desert generation as continuously disobeying YHWH, leading the latter to the extreme of loathing the former. Furthermore, although Ps 105 presents the positive sense of Israel's time in the desert; nevertheless, it seems that little importance is given to it compared to the themes of the Patriarchs, Joseph, and the plagues in Egypt.

It is surprising that the salvific deeds of YHWH during Israel's desert period are almost completely absent in the hymns of praise. One would expect to find them in such psalms, which praise YHWH for His interventions in Israel's history. However, on the contrary, only Ps 136 makes reference to them, and in a very fleeting manner compared to the emphasis placed on the themes of Creation and of the Egyptian period. Psalm 135, which is parallel to Ps 136 in almost all aspects, does not include the desert period.

All this reflects not so much the little importance the psalmists attach to Israel's time in the desert (Pss 78 and 106 refer to it quite extensively; Ps 95 mentions it explicitly) but, rather, the predominance of the desert period's negative sense over the positive. In the psalms, greater use has been made of the rebellious acts of the people in the desert in order to warn the present generation, than of YHWH's salvific deeds as basis for praising Him.

(d) It seems that the Deuteronomist mentality emphasizes the positive sense of the desert tradition, while the Priestly, the negative. In the prophets of the eighth century B.C. —possible sources of the Deuteronomist—, the positive interpretation prevails. The same holds for Isaiah and Jeremiah, in which indications of the Deuteronomist mentality cannot be denied. On the other hand, in Ezekiel —possible beginning of the Priestly tradition— the negative conception of the desert period is predominant. Finally, in the Psalms both the positive and negative senses appear, implying, perhaps, both Deuteronomist and Priestly influence. All this seems to suggest that the positive interpretation of the desert tradition is characteristic of the Deuteronomist, while the negative interpretation, of the Priestly.

(e) We see that the prophetic books and the Psalms share a common structure of contrasting the infidelities of Israel with the faithful and constant providence of YHWH. This usually serves one of two purposes, namely:

- (i) to warn the present generation lest they commit the same transgressions as their ancestors and suffer the same punishments, or
- (ii) to give them hope that YHWH shall deliver them from their present distress, just as He rescued their ancestors many times in the desert.

5. None of the prophets studied considers the desert as the ideal dwelling place for Israel. They consider it merely as a place for the

People's preparation before their entrance into the Promised Land. The same can be said of the psalms analyzed above.

(a) Hosea uses the idea of bringing Israel back into the desert «as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt» (Hos 2:16-17). This is not an invitation to dwell in the desert but, rather, to return to the same degree of faithful intimacy with YHWH as at the time after the exodus from Egypt. This return shall make Israel worthy to enter the Land again.

Amos states explicitly that YHWH took his People out of Egypt and brought them into the desert so that they could possess the Land (Am 2:10).

(b) Isaiah and Jeremiah express this idea through the image of Israel going to her rest (Is 35:10; 63:14; Jer 31:2). This rest shall come only after a time in the desert.

Isaiah and Ezekiel refer to a purging of those who persist in their transgressions. Thus, only the faithful Israelites shall enter the Promised Land. Isaiah puts this idea across by stating that only the holy ones shall walk upon the Way of YHWH in the desert (Is 35:8). Ezekiel, on the other hand, uses the image of a shepherd selecting animals for the tithe (Ez 20:37-38).

(c) In most of the psalms we have studied above, the reference to Israel's trek through the desert is followed by the mention of YHWH's giving the Land to His people as their possession (Ps 78:54-55; 105:44) or heritage (135:12; 136:21-22). The Promised Land, and not the desert, is the place for Israel. Such is the case that the punishment for the erring desert generation is the denial of entry into the Land (95:11 «Therefore I swore in my anger that they should not enter my rest»).





NOTES

1. Cf. U.W. MAUSER, *Christ in the Wilderness* (SBT 39; London: SCM Press, 1963), 38.
2. Main categories: Hymns, Communal Laments, Royal Psalms, Individual Laments, Individual Songs of Thanksgiving.
Minor categories: Songs of Pilgrimage, Communal Songs of Thanksgiving, Wisdom Poetry.
Other psalms which Gunkel classifies as Mixed Poems are Pss 9-10, 36, 40, 77, 89, 90, 94, 107, 108, 119, 123, 129, 137, 139, and 144.
Cf. Gunkel's major works: *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (4th rev. ed., 1917); *Die Psalmen* (1926); *Einleitung in die Psalmen* (with J. Begrich; 1933 [posthumous]).
3. Among them, A. WEISER (cf. *The Psalms* [OTL; London: SCM Press, 1986], tran. H. HARTWELL of *Die Psalmen* [Das Alte Testament Deutsch 14/15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959]); L. SABOURIN (cf. *The Psalms* [Staten Island, NY: Society of St. Paul, 1974]).
4. S. MOWINCKEL (cf. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, vol. 2, tran. D.R. Ap-Thomas [Oxford: Blackwell, 1962], 112) uses the term «didactic hymns»; W.S. McCULLOUGH (cf. *The Book of Psalms* [IB 4; NY-Nashville: Abingdon, 1955], 414) calls it a «didactic ballad»; and A. WEISER (cf. *op. cit.*, 539) includes it in the genre of «didactic wisdom poetry».
5. A.F. CAMPBELL, «Psalm 78: A Contribution to the Theology of Tenth Century Israel», CBQ 41 (1979) 76-77.
6. A. Weiser believes that Ps 78 was most probably recited by a priest in connection with the tradition of the Covenant Festival, while W.S. McCullough thinks that the festival in question was the Passover. On the other hand, S. Mowinckel specifies that Ps 78 is non-cultic (cf. *op. cit.*, 111).
7. A. GELIN, *The Psalms are Our Prayers* (Collegeville, Minn: The Liturgical Press, 1969 [?]), 28-29.
8. E.g., O. EISSFELDT (cf. *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32, 1-43 und das Lehrge-
dicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse de Umgebung des Mose-Liedes* [Berlin, 1958], 26-41), who proposes a date during the time of Solomon, i.e., prior to 930 B.C.; and A.F. CAMPBELL (cf. *op. cit.*, 79).
9. Thus, many of these scholars propose a pre-exilic date for Ps 78.
10. Thus, ruling out a date after 587-586 B.C., the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple.

11. E.g., W.O.E. OESTERLEY (cf. *The Psalms* [London: Methuen, 1939], *ad. loc.*), who places the psalms redaction at a «comparatively late period» after the P document; and G.W. COATS (cf. *Rebellion in the Wilderness. The Murmuring Motif in the Wilderness Traditions of the Old Testament* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1968]), who includes the psalm within the murmuring tradition.
12. Cf. Dt 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; and 32:46.
13. The giving of this law is also referred to in Dt 33:4, within Moses' blessing of the tribes: «(Moses enjoined a law on us.) The assembly of Jacob comes into its inheritance....»
14. Cf. R.P. CARROLL, «Psalm 78: Vestiges of a Tribal Polemic», VT 21 (1971) 137-138.
15. Cf. G.E. MENDENHALL, «Election», IDB, vol. 2, p. 79.
16. Cf. R.E. CLEMENTS, «Deuteronomy and the Jerusalem Cult-Tradition», VT 15 (1965) 300-312.
17. Cf. J. MUILENBURG, «The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations», VT 9 (1959) 350 note 3.
18. Thus, for example, Dt 31:27 («your rebelliousness and your stubbornness»); 32:5 («a deceitful and underhand brood»); 32:20 («a deceitful brood, children with no loyalty in them»).
19. Cf. W.S. MCCULLOUGH, *op. cit.*, 417.
20. «*Armed with a deceitful bow*], the most probable original of a difficult passage, cf v. 57: a bow which in time of use would not bend properly, and so proved unreliable; while the Bowman, being practically weaponless, *turned back in the day of battle*]. A copyist, by error of transposition, gave the tautological «armed, shooting with the bow»; and then as the point of the comparison was lost, the conjecture arose that there must be a reference to some event in which there had been rebellion against God in a cowardly retreat from battle. A glossator could not think this of Israel as a whole; and so he conjectures that *Ephraim* was at fault, and makes this insertion in the text» (C.A. BRIGGS and E.G. BRIGGS, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 2 [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960], 182-183. The Briggs think that the original should have read *nsqy qst rmyh* (armed with a deceitful bow), instead of *nsqy rummy qst* (armed, shooting with the bow). They suppose that *rmyh* was transposed by textual error.
21. Or Tanis, the capital of Egypt during the reign of Seti I (1318-1299 B.C.) and Rameses II (1299-1232 B.C.).
22. A similar miracle at Kadesh is described in Num 20:1-13, also as a consequence of the people's complaint.
23. «Those he led through the deserts never went thirsty; he made water spring for them from the rock, he split the rock and water formed....» (Is 48:21)
This imagery of abundance of water in the desert can also be found in Is 35:6; 41:18; and 43:19-20, analyzed previously.
24. Among them, G.W. COATS (cf. *Rebellion in the Wilderness*), who uses Ps 78:67ff and other passages as the basis for concluding that the murmuring tradition arose within the Jerusalem temple cult during the period of the divided kingdom as a polemic against the Northern Kingdom's claim of being the true bearers of the Covenant..

25. Cf. A.F. CAMPBELL, *op. cit.*, 71-72.
26. Cf. Ex 17:2, 7; Dt 6:16; Ps 95:9.
27. A.F. CAMPBELL rejects the idea that Ps 78 falls within the Pentateuchal murmuring tradition because it narrates only one act of rebellion and it does not have the characteristic structure and vocabulary of such tradition (cf. *op. cit.*, 66).
28. A.F. CAMPBELL, *op. cit.*, 70.
29. That is «burning» (from the root *bʿ*).
30. That is «graves of craving».
31. Cf. A.F. CAMPBELL, *op. cit.*, 66-67. He points out differences in the manna accounts: the Exodus account describes the manna as a flake-like thing that remains after the dew has dried up; in Ps 78, on the other hand, it is described as heavenly rain of grain. He also presents differences in the quail accounts: in Ex 16 the quails fall in the middle of the camp, while in Num 11 they fall around the camp, a day's journey either side; furthermore, the Exodus and Numbers accounts use the term *šlw* (quail), while Ps 78 uses the terms *s'r* (flesh, meat) and *'wp knp* (winged birds).
32. This search for God in times of difficulty is also found in Hos 5:15 and Is 21:7.
33. Cf. Dt 32:15,18, where «Rock» is identified with «God».
34. *Go'el*, a term used thirteen times in Is 40-66 and only four times elsewhere in the OT.
35. Among them, H.-J. KRAUS (cf. *Psalmen*, 4th ed. [BKAT 15/1-2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972], 546) and G.W. Coats (cf. *op. cit.*, 216).
36. Cf. A.F. CAMPBELL, *op. cit.*, 71.
37. Hos 11:9.
38. Cf. Ex 32:11-14 and Num 14:13-20.
39. Cf. Is 48:9 and Ez 20:22.
40. C.A. BRIGGS and E.G. BRIGGS, *op. cit.*, 187.
41. Cf. Dt. 9:22-24, where there is a list of places where the people rebelled: Tabera, Massah, Kib-roth-hattaavah, Kadesh-barnea.
Once again, the theme of testing God appears. See previous discussion on v. 18.
42. Cf. W.S. MCCULLOUGH, *op. cit.*, 422.
43. Cf. J. DAY, «Pre-Deuteronomic Allusions to the Covenant in Hosea and Psalm LXXVIII», VT 36 (1986) 11-12.
44. Cf. Ex 15:17 and Dt 3:25; M. DAHOOD, *Psalms II. 51-100*, 3rd ed. (AB 17; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), 245.
45. Cf. 1 Sam 9:12. These high places were sometimes centers for paganistic practices (cf. 1 Kg 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kg 18:4; 23:8).
46. Prominent among them is G.W. Coats, who sees this polemic reflected in the murmuring stories (see note 25). S.J. de Vries questions Coats's claim that these stories «had been developed in the temple as an ostensible anti-Ephraimite polemic» («The Origin of the Murmuring Tradition», JBL 87 [1968] 54), and places the origin of such stories at an earlier date.
47. Cf. 1 Sam 1:3ff; 3:21; 4:3; Jos 18:1; Judg 21:19.
48. Cf. 1 Sam 4:10-11. Ps 78:60-61 is quite similar to Jer 12:7 («I have forsaken my house, / I have abandoned my heritage; // I have given the beloved of my soul / into the hands of her enemies»).

49. Our translation.
50. Cf. E. KALT, *Herder's Commentary on the Psalms* (Westminster, MD: Herder, 1961), 24, 165; M. DAHOOD, *Psalms I* (AB 16; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 267-268; W. EICHRODT, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol.1 (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 211-214; A.A. ANDERSON, *Psalms*, vol. 1: *Psalms 1-72* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1972), 345, 436.
51. Cf. H. GUNKEL, *Die Psalmen*, 5th ed., reprint of 1929 ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), *ad. loc.*; A. WEISER, *Psalms* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1979), 542.
52. Cf. S. CAVALLETTI, «Proposta di lettura del Sal. 78,65», *RivB* 26 (1978) 337-340.
53. B.F. BATTO, «The Sleeping God: An Ancient Near Eastern Motif of Divine Sovereignty», *Bib* 68 (1987) 155.
54. *Ibid.*, 172.
55. To Abraham (Dt 9:27; Ps 105:6,42); to Isaac and Jacob (Dt 9:27); to Moses (Dt 34:5; Jos 1:1; 1 Chron 6:49; 2 Chron 24:9; Neh 10:29; Dan 9:11); to Josue (Jos 24:29; Judg 2:8); to David (Ps 18 and 36: titles).
56. We agree with A.F. Campbell when he writes that «the simplest explanation of the highly individual form of the plague account in Psalm 78 is that it was composed before the pentateuchal selection and sequence had become traditional» (*op. cit.*, 69-70).
57. For a brief review, see G.H. DAVIES, «Psalm 95», *ZAW* 85 (1973) 183-187.
58. G.H. DAVIES, *op. cit.*, 194.
59. Cf. *ibid.*, 190.
60. *Ibid.*, 189-190.
61. Cf. R. KITTEL, *Die Psalmen* (KAT; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1922), *ad. loc.* H. GUNKEL (cf. *Die Psalmen*, 5th ed., reprint of 1929 ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968], *ad. loc.*) thinks that the second part was also sung by the same community in procession, not by a priestly choir.
62. Cf. H. SCHMIDT, *Die Psalmen* (HAT; Tübingen: Mohr, 1934), *ad. loc.*
63. Cf. G.H. DAVIES, *op. cit.*, 191.
64. Cf. C.B. RIDING, «Psalm 95 1-7c as a Large Chiasm», *ZAW* (1976) 418.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Cf. M. GIRARD, *op. cit.*, 57.
67. The words in italics help to see the parallelisms. A-A': «listen to his voice» and «know my ways» both refer to following the laws of YHWH. B-B': the same word (*lebab*) is used. C-C': «fathers» has «generation» as its parallel. D: «work» is the central element of this concentric structure.
68. Cf. G.H. DAVIES, *op. cit.*, 194.
69. M. Girard writes, «Yahweh's "work" (*p'h*) clearly resumes the theme of the hymn: God's "making" (*'sh*) of the world (5a) and of the Covenant (6b).»
70. Num 20:13 «These are the waters of Meribah, where the sons of Israel challenged YHWH and he proclaimed his holiness.»
Ps 81:8 «I tested you at the waters of Meribah.»
71. Dt 33:8 «Grant to Levi your Urim, / your Thummim to the one you favoured / after you had tested him at Massah / and striven with him in the waters of Meribah.»

72. Our translation.
73. G.H. DAVIES, *op. cit.*, 194.
74. G.H. Davies places the composition date at a pre-exilic period: «The polytheistic reference in v. 3, the cultic value of "Today", and the use of the Massah-Meribah illustration pre-dispose me to regard the Psalm as pre-exilic» (*op. cit.*, 195).
75. Thus, A.F. KIRKPATRICK writes, «[Pss 105 and 106] present, so to speak, the obverse and reverse of Israel's history; the common prophetic theme of Jehovah's loving kindness and Israel's ingratitude» (cf. *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 3 [Cambridge: University Press, 1902], Intro. to Ps 105).
76. Thus, e.g., L. SABOURIN, *The Psalms. Their Origin and Meaning* (NY: Alba House, 1974), 392; H.-J. KRAUS, *Psalmen*, 4th ed. (BKAT 15/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), 718.
H. GUNKEL classifies it as a *Legende*, a late hymn using material from Israel's sacred history (cf. *Einleitung in die Psalmen* [with J. Begrich; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933]). S. MOWINCKEL includes it in a typology of non-cultic «learned psalmography», and specifies that it was a didactic psalm that has developed into a «hymnal legend» (cf. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, vol.2, tran. D.R. Ap-Thomas [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962], 112).
77. Among them, J. KÜHLEWEIN, *Geschichte in den Psalmen* (Calwer Theologische Monographien A/2; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1973), 71-81; R.J. CLIFFORD, «Style and Purpose in Ps 105», *Bib 60* (1979) 421; A. WEISER, *The Psalms. A Commentary* (OTL; London, SCM Press, 1962) tran. H. HARTWELL from the German *Die Psalmen*, 5th ed. (Das Alte Testament Deutsch 14/15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 673.
78. Cf. R.J. CLIFFORD, *op. cit.*, 421-422.
79. Cf. W.S. McCULLOUGH, et. al., *The Book of Psalms* (IB 4; NY-Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1955), 557.
80. Cf., e.g., C.A. BRIGGS and E. G. BRIGGS, *op. cit.*, 342.
81. The mention of Isaac in references to the Patriarchs is rare in the OT, in which the binome Abraham-Jacob is common, Thus, v. 9b could be a gloss.
82. R.J. CLIFFORD, *op. cit.*, 424-425.
83. Cf., e.g., A. WEISER, *op. cit.*, 675.
84. We note that what is described in v. 22 has no parallel in the Genesis account. S. HOLME-NIELSEN thinks, however, that «the idea of Joseph as the instructor of Pharaoh's elders and teacher of wisdom seems to be a rather exaggerated interpretation of Gen 41,37-40, maybe inspired by the views on the heathen world as an underdeveloped world in relation to Israel, which confronts us in Is. 40-55, e.g., 43,9; 45,14ff.; 46,1f. and especially ch. 47» («The Exodus Traditions in Psalm 105», *ASTI 11* [1978] 25).
85. A.R. CERESKO, *op. cit.*, 34.
86. As we have seen above, some scholars believe that the cattle plague is mentioned in Ps 78:48a. This theory, however, requires the ammendment of the text. Thus, we prefer the opinion held by other scholars that the Ps 78 account does not include the cattle plague.
87. Thus, we agree with S.E. LOEWENSTAMM (cf. «The Number of Plagues in Psalm 105», *Bib 52* [1971] 34-38) when he affirms that the flies and gnats make up

- only one plague, basing his argument on the psalmist's technique of presenting each plague in at least two stichoi. Both the flies and the gnats are mentioned in the same stichoi pair.
88. Cf. R.J. CLIFFORD, *op. cit.*, 426. He also points out that «in the pentateuchal traditions, the pillar of fire is not used to light Israel's way but as a sign of divine presence in the night».
 89. Cf. A.F. KIRKPATRICK, *The Book of Psalms*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, 1902), 621.
 90. D.A. FOX, «The Ninth Plague: An Exegetical Note» (Abstract), *JAAR* 14 (1977) 219.
 91. Cf. A.C.C. LEE, «Genesis I and the Plagues Tradition in Psalm CV», *VT* 40 (1990) 259.
 92. *Ibid.*
 93. Not necessarily seven plagues, as S.E. LOEWENSTAMM insists (cf. *op. cit.*, 38). Another of these traditions could have been that which is extant in Ps 78.
 94. A.C.C. LEE, *op. cit.*, 258. He gives the example of the plagues narrative in the Wisdom of Solomon (11:15-20).
 95. Consequently, we have not encountered any specific study about the desert tradition in Ps 105.
 96. Ex 13:21-22 speaks of a *pillar* of cloud and a *pillar* of fire.
 97. Cf. R.J. CLIFFORD, *op. cit.*, 426.
 98. A.R. CERESKO, *op. cit.*, 37.
 99. Thus, R.J. CLIFFORD observes that «these verses (42-44) also reformulate vv. 37-38, the exodus from Egypt, so that the exodus and (divinely sustained) existence in the desert are seen as the result of the patriarchal promise of the land. *wayyôš'ēm* in v. 37 is picked up in v. 43, *wayyôš'i* "He brought out". *šāšôn* "joy" of v. 43 echoes *sāmāh* "(Egypt) rejoiced", while Israel's inheriting the wealth of the nations in v. 44 picks up the *spoliare Aegyptios* theme in v. 37» (*op. cit.*, 426).
 100. Cf. M. DAHOOD, *Psalms III: 101-150* (AB 17A; NY: Doubleday, 1970), 67; L. SABOURIN, *op. cit.*, 315. U.W. MAUSER calls it a «psalm of contrition» (*Christ in the Wilderness* [SBT 39; London: SCM Press, 1963]).
 101. S. MOWINCKEL, *op. cit.*, 112.
 102. Cf. C.A. BRIGGS and E. G. BRIGGS, *op. cit.*, 342
 103. S. MOWINCKEL, *op. cit.*, 111.
 104. יֵשֶׁם אֲדָדִים לְדֹרְבָה
 105. וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הַמִּים
 106. Ps 106 does not go into the details of the feeding with quails.
 107. A.A. ANDERSON, *The Book of Psalms*, vol. 2: *Psalms 73-150* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1972), 741.
 108. Thus, M. FISHBANE writes, «For if the old *traditum* cast Phineas in the role of a prototypical enforcer of ritual purity —much like the Levites in Exod. 32:26-9, who similarly owed their clerical office to a zealous act of retribution against cultic apostates— the new *traditio* gave him a more "legal", even prophetic, role. Phineas now functions like Moses who, after the early ritual apostasy with the calf, "stood (עמד) in the breach (בפריץ) before [YHWH] to quell his destructive wrath" (Ps. 106:23). Indeed, Phineas too rose up (עמד) to quell the wrath which burst (תרפרץ) forth against the people (vv. 29f.)... In the hands of a later tradent,

- then, an old tradition of violence served as the basis for an aggadic transformation that emphasized the faithful intercessor and the staying of divine wrath» (cf. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985], 398-399).
109. Cf. G.J. BROOKE, «Psalms 105 and 106 at Qumran», *RevQ* 14 (1989) 279.
 110. «You must not hand over any of your children to have them passed to Molech, nor must you profane the name of your God in this way. I am YHWH» (Lev 18:21).
Cf. K. VAN DER TOORN, et. al., eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), cols. 345, 448.
 111. Cf. A. WEISER, *op. cit.*, 682.
 112. Especially during the time of the Judges.
 113. A. WEISER, *op. cit.*, 682.
 114. Among them, R.J. CLIFFORD and A.R. CERESKO, as we have seen above.
 115. Thus, we share R.J. CLIFFORD's opinion (cf. *op. cit.*, 427).
 116. Among them, G.J. Brooke.
 117. It is interesting to note the Ps 105 does not use the term *midba-r*.
 118. Cf. A. WEISER, *Psalms*, tran. H. HARTWELL (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1962) of *Die Psalmen*, 5th ed. (Das Alte Testament Deutsch 14/15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 789; L. ALONSO-SCHÖKEL and C. CARNITI, *Salmos. traducción, introducciones y comentario*, vol. 2 (NBE; Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1993), 1549.
 119. Cf. A. Weiser, *op. cit.*, 789.
 120. Ps 135: 1-Ps 113:1; 2-Ps 134:1; 4-Dt 7:6; 7-Jer 10:13; 10-12-Ps 136:17-22; 13-18-Is-44:12-20; Jer 10:6-10; 15-20-Ps 115:4-11.
 121. Cf. L. SABOURIN, *The Psalms, Their Origin and Meaning*, new, enlarged, updated ed. (NY: Alba House, 1974), 190; W.S. MCCULLOUGH, et. al., *The Book of Psalms* (IB 4; NY-Nashville: Abingdon, 1955), 694.
L. ALONSO-SCHÖKEL writes, «Idolatry has been peacefully overcome. The holy city is mentioned, and the mountain of the temple is already reconstructed. No allusion is made to a king; the priest and Levites play a principal role. Most probably, this psalm was composed after the exile, for the use of the Jewish community» (*op. cit.*, 1549; our translation).
 122. A. WEISER, *op. cit.*, 789.
 123. *Ibid.*, 788.
 124. *Ibid.*, 715.
 125. *Ibid.*, 789.
 126. Cf. C.A. BRIGGS and E.G. BRIGGS, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 2 (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 479.
Ex 18:11 «Now I know that YHWH is greater than all gods [because in the matter as to which they acted presumptuously against them (?)].»
 127. Cf. A. HURVITZ, «The History of a Legal Formula. *kōl 'šer-hiāpēs 'āsāh* (Psalms cxv 3, cxxxv 6)», *VT* 32 (1982) 266-267.
 128. A. WEISER, *op. cit.*, 790.
 129. כִּי־דִין יְדוּחַ עָפֹר וְעַל־עַבְדֵּי יְהוָה
 130. A. WEISER, *op. cit.*, 716.

131. Cf. L. SABOURIN, *op. cit.*, 190.
132. Ps 136: 2-Dt 10:17; 7-9-Gen 1:16; 12-Dt 4:34.
133. Cf. A. WEISER, *op. cit.*, 792.
134. S. MOWINCKEL, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, vol. 1, tran. D.R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 85.
135. J. BAZAK explains that «the difference arises from the fact that the text in Genesis refers to the situation before the creation of man, while the psalm speaks from the viewpoint of after the creation of man. Before the creation of man the sun was indeed the sole ruler of the day; once man was created, however, he was given [dominion over all the earth]. The sun is hence no more ruler of the day but a ruler "by" day, not a sole ruler but one of the rulers» («The Geometric-Figurative Structure of Psalm CXXXVI», VT 35 [1985] 132-133).
136. J. BAZAK believes that the psalmist «wanted to stress that not only the moon, the orbit of which is patent to all, is a ruler "by night", but also some of the stars, the planets, rule the night. He therefore states that the moon and also the stars rule by night...» (*op. cit.*, 133).
137. Cf. J. BAZAK, *op. cit.*, 134.
138. Cf. *ibid.*, 137. C.A. BRIGGS AND E.G. BRIGGS think that these verses probably refer to Maccabean afflictions (cf. *op. cit.*, 483).
139. The quails and the Meribah incidents are not found elsewhere in the OT except in the above mentioned psalms. Quail incident: Pss 78 and 105; Meribah incident: Pss 78, 95, and 106 (and also in Ps 81).
140. With the exception of Hos 9:10, which mentions the Baal-Peor incident.
141. We note that in Hos 2:16, the idea of purification in the desert takes on a positive note. In Ezekiel, however, it has a negative tone because the prophet emphasizes the rejection of the unfaithful members of the people of Israel.



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